

Correspondence of Bernette Chase Kemp and Anna Durkee Kemp

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF BERNETTE CHASE KEMP and ANNA DURKEE KEMP
1915 - 1925

Letters edited by Janet Kemp Doell

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE E.C. KEMP FAMILY - Part I - Introduction

The story of my mother, Anna Smith and of her friendship with Bernette Zoe Chase, later Bernette Kemp, and of her own eventual marriage to Carl Kemp and their early years together in a Europe ravaged by the first World War is too interesting and indeed dramatic a history to be forgotten in a generation or two. For some time I have considered writing it down for my children and nieces and nephews. Upon Anna Kemp's death I found a treasure trove of letters in her trunk, written during the war years and up to 1923. Suddenly the old stories I had heard again and again took on a new dimension, and I became determined to put this story on paper, using excerpts from the letters to make the people come alive once more.

Now in my new life, traveling by sailboat for weeks at a time with my husband Richard, I have the time to undertake such a project. Let me start with some background narrative.

Anna Smith, from all she told us, had a privileged and happy childhood. This in spite of the fact that her mother died three weeks after she was born. She was the youngest of six children one of whom, Margaret, had died as a young child. Her early years were spent with her sister Mary, or May as she was called, nine years her senior; her brothers Ernest,

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Carl and Burnell (Uncle Bun), her father and her grandfather Durkee. Most of the time there was also a housekeeper and a maid. Her maiden aunt, Abigail Imogene Durkee (Aunt Jean), taught school nearby and she was the one that made sure everyone was being raised properly and knew their P's and Q's. A St. Bernard, Tige, also played a part in her life until he died in her 13th year.

The house was large and comfortable, supported by her father's wholesale butter and egg business, the A.M. Smith Company of Boston. The grounds of the Melrose home were spacious, and their life was what might be called genteel. On Saturday nights the clean white tablecloth was put on the table and she always remembered with pleasure the look of everything clean and fresh, and the good dishes, The tablecloth, incidentally, was turned over on Wednesdays. I have never understood how a large family could use one white tablecloth for a whole week. I think Aunt Jean's teaching must have paid off. The friends Anna made in her first years at school remained so throughout their lives, even though they were separated for thirty years while she traveled with her husband. Upon graduating from high school she declined the opportunity to go to college as her sister had done. She did however go on a long trip to Europe with May and her friend Jennie Prescott. Hearing it from the other two it was a hilarious and inspiring trip, but as far as Anna was concerned, plagued with homesickness and other illness as well, it was a pretty grim experience which she did not want to repeat.

But I am getting ahead of my story. During her high school years a gentleman moved in down the street who became friendly with Grandpa Durkee. For part of every year his niece, Bernette Chase, came from Florida to visit him. I don't recall if she came for the summers or for longer periods of time, or if perhaps they both came for parts of the year only, but, however, that was how the two households became acquainted. Anna and Nettie, as she was called, became fast friends. Nettie was about five years older than Anna and the latter was fifteen when she first met Carl Kemp, then Nettie's suitor. The year was 1904.

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Carl Kemp was a young man who had a hard time finding the right slot in life. He had tried various careers, including four years at sea, and eventually took up osteopathy, graduating in one of the early classes at Kirksville, Missouri. He married Nettie in 1909, and they had an infant daughter, Dorothy, in 1911. He found he could not support his family with his meager practice. Although he never finished high school, he was self-educated, and it was about this time that a friend of his who had retired from the Foreign Service suggested he try the exams for entry into that profession. He read extensively in preparation and passed the exams. I believe he said there were only about sixteen or eighteen other applicants whereas today the exams are taken by thousands.

His first post was St. Pierre and Miquelon, tiny French islands off the coast of Newfoundland. In the meantime little Dorothy had died in a crib accident, her head having been caught when the side came down accidentally, Nettie had a hard time recovering from this tragedy and suffered from depression for some time. However, 1914 found Carl and Nettie, penniless but hopeful, heading for his first post as vice consul. They stopped in Melrose to see Anna on their way.

The first of the letters from which I shall quote excerpts was from Nettie to Anna from St. Pierre et Miquelon. Carl had been transferred to Marseille, France, and had already left when the letter was written. Nettie was pregnant again and under discussion were the arrangements being made for Nettie's approaching confinement. What with a war raging in Europe, Nettie was to go to Melrose until after the baby arrived some six months later, and then rejoin Carl as soon as they could travel. Apparently, Anna had wanted her to stay at the house on Porter Street but Nettie preferred to stay elsewhere.

Sunday, June 27, 1915 St. Pierre and Miquelon

Anna Dear,

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You poor child! And I wouldn't have hurt your dear feelings for worlds, because honestly I think more of your friendship than any I have outside of Carl... Carl said when he left that he was sure I would be happy near you because you seemed to be a husband to me anyhow. I think sometimes he is a little jealous of you, which may seem ridiculous but may be quite true.

Now my dear I'm more than grateful to you for all your trouble and worry about me and by all means I'll go the room on Hillside Avenue and be glad to. Not that I know where that is but it doesn't matter just so long as it's near you.

After this letter is written I shall add the date I shall leave. I think next Saturday as the packing is about all done, and it fogs all the time in July as it has in June and things are not very gay. However I'm quite cheerful and everyone wonders at it; but I'm so glad Carl has this glorious chance that I can't find it in my heart to be as lonely as I ought. And I'm so much stronger now and no nausea for a week that I feel very happy.

I wonder if Carl had time to run out to see you. I hope so ...

P.S. You are a dear child to want me with you but I couldn't consent to visit anyone, I'm too disagreeable to be anyone's guest what with too great a desire for personal comfort, a greedy appetite and fits of sleepiness which overcome me at odd times and seasons I couldn't think of visiting.

***The next letter is dated more than a year later. In the meantime Marjorie had been born on January 3, 1916 in Melrose. Anna was her Godmother, not without some misgivings on her part as she was not too enthused about organized religion, or any other kind either for that matter. When Marjorie was nine months old Nettie packed her up and took her to Marseille. In the fall of that year Carl was transferred to Tunis and there followed an active correspondence between Carl and Nettie and Anna, and the first of the two bundles of letters I found in Anna Kemp's trunk consists of letters from Tunis to Melrose. From these

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yellowed pages I was able to extract several strands of narrative. There are charming descriptions of Marjorie and her development, which together with other expressions of concern of one kind and another attest to Nettie's warm and affectionate nature. Second, there is the interesting progression in Carl's expressions of affection, and the increased familiarity in his letters to Anna. She had always maintained to us that she didn't know him at all before she married him, having just seen him briefly two or three times. But these letters show that a friendship of sorts had developed between them, however brief their encounters had been.

Third, there are interesting descriptions of life in Tunis, with weather being a regular subject of discourse, and a declining interest in the area becoming very noticeable.

Finally, there is the constant talk of Anna's coming to visit them, an invitation repeated enough times to become tedious and therefore was edited for the most part in my quotations. In the very last letters, talk had switched to discussing their return to the States, then uppermost in their minds.

***Nettie's first letter from Tunis, dated October, 1916, shows great enthusiasm for their new environs:

... (Marjorie) is laying on the steamer rug in the garden and I am sitting by her trying to write but she's so very interested in the process that it's almost impossible ... I never remembered dreaming that I dwelled in marble halls but this house is almost one. Lots of marble about and no extra charge. The Arab messenger of the Consulate in his very gorgeous uniform sits in the hall and admits callers, runs errands between times and is generally useful about the house. We've an excellent cook and Emma for the baby and a sort of second girl and everything runs nicely. I've an excellent appetite again and there are lots of good things to eat ...

The weather is wonderful, even better than Florida, and the city the most fascinating I've ever seen. When we are really settled and have more time I'm going to explore it

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thoroughly with Carl. Wonderful things to buy in Arab town and I see where the money will go. In short I'm delighted with it all and the winter will be very happy if we all keep well ... I do hope you'll get over to see it all. This beats Europe I think ... Almost any jaded globe trotter would be pleased here I should think ...

Letters written late in 1916 refer to Anna's surgery for an ovarian cyst, no small undertaking in those days. Carl writes just before that event, commenting on her failing health;

Dear Anna,

Nettie has probably written all the news although there is no news particularly. The Arabs amuse themselves raising Cain until day break on the occasion of marriages and other celebrations, but that is hardly news. I find myself with plenty to do but fortunately have a clerk to help me now. The weather continues beautiful — why aren't you here to enjoy it? — and Marjorie is growing up all the time.

I shall be glad to hear of improvement in your personal health. It's slow I know, having seen such cases before, but they are a long time coming on, and one can't expect to cure them in a week, like a cold. You are lucky in having means to aid you in your recovery. So your D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathy) is one of those “damn drunken Drs.” I wonder if he belongs to the Alpha Chapter. Tell him my number is 108. My impression is that Drs. coming from Missouri (as I did) are perhaps a trifle more disreputable than the others — better osteopaths but rougher characters, especially in the earlier classes. The Bucket of Blood where Rat Rodgers got knifed and the professor of surgery got a bullet through his ear and where the lay reader of the Episcopal church drank his whiskey, was closed my second year in school, much to the regret of the lower classes. When Nettie came out there with me I used to point out the place to her and turn my head to hide my emotion.

To show how strong a hold one's early habits have, I have only to tell you of having purchased a bottle of boukha, Arab whiskey made from rotten figs, which is particularly

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potent — and forbidden. I have also purchased pipes and hashish wherewith to ruin my soul. You must surely come over and see this interesting country. The climate is beautiful now and seems like home.

But I must get on the job and so will close,

Most sincerely yours, ECK

***A little later Carl writes again:

Dear Anna,

I am indeed sorry to hear of the necessity for an operation, not that I consider it so much a danger as a nuisance. If it were a brain tumor or some other ticklish job it would be different. I took ether once and it was an interesting experience.

I do certainly hope that circumstances will permit a trip over here at not too distant a date. The change should do you good, and tho it gets hot here in the middle of the summer, the rest of the year appears to be delightful. I suppose, and hope, that I may be allowed to remain here for awhile, long enough to get myself together ...

I wish I could think up more to write about, but my ordinarily magnificent intellect is not in evidence at the moment. I haven't been keeping a notebook lately, or I might have something brilliant to remark.

I must close, as it's bad form to write on the back of one's letter, I believe. With best wishes for health and recovery, I am

Most happy to be included in the "all". [Referring to a "love from us all" in Nettie's letter.]Carl

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***.A couple weeks later, on December 5, both Carl and Nettie write to Anna following the operation. First Nettie's:

My Dearest Anna,

I've been hoping we'd get another word about your progress but nothing as yet but Mabel's [One of Anna's old friends from kindergarten days] note saying you were out of ether... Carl is writing too sitting at the opposite side of the table in baby's nursery which is more comfortably warmed than any room in the house. We are having another cold spell now and a little heat goes very well. The houses are all colder than the out of doors when the sun shines brightly every day. We are just through dinner and Marjorie has been in bed since six. She plays so hard up until the last minute that she sleeps soundly all night and awakens all rosy and rested and full of "pep" as Carl says, in the morning ...

... We do wish you and yours a happy Christmas with all our hearts. Marjorie is going to hang up her stocking and have a tree all her very own. I wish you could have seen how happy she was with her Thanksgiving turkey bone. Our two old American ladies had a beautiful time, too, having been here seven and nine years respectively without an American festival of any kind to break the monotony. Neither had they ever met each other before and they seemed quite delighted with each other.

I hope May's circus will come off before Christmas so you'll all be off your nervous strain and all happy together ...

***The befriending of the old American ladies was typical of Carl's approach to his job as Consul. In all our European posts we entertained American ladies and gentlemen who either lived in that city or who were stranded in their travels.

May's "circus" to which Nettie alludes is the expected birth of twins. Now Carl's letter, written at the same time, in a somewhat different vein:

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Dear Anna,

Your letter received and soon after one from Mabel received saying that you had survived the gas attack and everything promises all right. We all were glad to hear this although I didn't worry greatly about you, knowing how accidental all accidents are. Some people can't really help accidents, like a poor chap who was badly run over by an engine when I was at Mansfield. They put him on a special train for Boston which ran off the track. Then they put him on a regular one, loaded him into an ambulance which ran into a fire truck, killing a horse and breaking both legs of the driver. Such things do happen, but they are rare and if everyone kept their minds on the accidents no one would get out of bed in the morning for fear of stepping on a tack and having lockjaw by noon... The house we inhabit promises to be a cool one, much cooler than the ones down in the center of town. I must admit the sirocco is really hot but there are only two or three per season and they last only two or three days. You could plan on coming in October or late September and spend the winter here ...

Nettie is on the other side of the lamp scratching away furiously at her own letter to you. She will probably express her affection as love, or whatever you call it, in her particular way. As for me, I can only say most sincerely yours,(Nettie says I can send my love. Hurray!)

A [few] days later Nettie refers once more to the surgery:

Anna Dear,

Your first little note showing that you were really convalescing was received this morning, and brought joy to our hearts ... I know just how hard it was for you to make up your mind

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to it and fully realize all that it has meant to you — that is, insofar as anyone can realize what things mean to other folks — I shall be glad now to hear that May is safely over her troubles and that the twins are arrived as by schedule ... Hope May will decide in the end to go to the hospital as she seems to have good help at home, and I know how restful it is. Am glad that you found it rather less disagreeable than you expected ...

With a large amount of love and good wishes from us all for speedy recovery.

Yours more than lovingly, Nettie

Before Christmas Carl wrote again:

Dear Anna,

It is only five days to Christmas and rather late to write a Merry Xmas letter but it may get to you for a Happy New Year or a Truthful Washington's Birthday. Anyway it carries the best of wishes, not to put it stronger. ... My only real worry is that our Uncle Sam may make a difficulty about your coming here next year, but a lot may happen before then, even such a strange thing as the end of the war, though I admit I can't see that yet... I think you would like our winter climate here. Chilly on cold days, and the house is not really properly heated for real cold weather, but today, for instance, the door is open on the garden, a lot of song birds are making a fuss in the trees, the wall is purple with bougainvillea flowers and Marjorie is asleep in the midst of it, the really choicest blossom of the lot ...

A typical Nettie note was included in the letter:

Anna dear,

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This morsel of filet I bought with the \$1.50 I owe you. As there are now six francs in the dollar you get a good deal for your money. Thus do you profit from the war we all deplore — the more so that we feel it keeps you from us. Put this into the center of an embroidered cushion cover, cover the cushion with pink satin and put your dear head on the pillow and think sometimes of me. You'll see how pretty it will all be, including the head! Loving you,

Nettie

Starting with an excerpt from one of Nettie's early letters we can get a glimpse of life in the consular corps at that times:

December 5, 1916

... I got reckless this morning and went to the best ladies' tailor in town and ordered a very handsome dress, one piece with coat of same material. I shall make my calls with Carl the first of January and my calling clothes are too light and bright for his weather. It's colder than Florida and people dress as warmly as in Boston. It seems to me more people wear furs here than in a city in New England, and in April it will be hotter than Tophet so everyone says ... I shall try to stay here next summer with Carl unless baby feels the heat too much. It's so difficult traveling in Europe now I should prefer your coming here in the fall ...

... We are beginning our calls this P.M. The wife of the resident General is in mourning and not receiving but we're commencing with the next in rank and going down the lot. No one outside the necessary officials and the Consular Corps. Otherwise we'd have 150 to make. And I'm going to make my health a reason for not making the others. Although as a matter of fact I'm better than for a long time and fat for me, everybody here thinks I look delicate so I'm going to work it for what it's worth. All the women here are working themselves ill in hospital work etc. Two young American girls have just come over to nurse in the French

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military hospital here. Come from New York and seem very nice — not trained nurses but belong to the auxiliary service and have been working in the American Ambulance at Paris for ten months. They say they only have one trained nurse there for every ten beds and use Auxiliaries for the real work. I imagine they got tired of doing the scrubbing etc. and came down here to see if they couldn't be bigger toads in a smaller puddle.

Of course over here I keep my past history dark but it amuses me to keep up with these amateur nurses and their troubles. [Nettie was a nurse by profession, or had been.]

A couple of weeks after the last excerpt, Nettie continues:

... We've been working away at our visits and next week will be the finish of them I think. The ladies of the Consular Corps are giving tea parties each week, in succession and we shall get in on that when our calls are finished. That will be rather fun. I'm glad they're doing it so I can get acquainted with the bunch. Meeting them casually they seem charming. The wife of the Consul de France is about my age, lives very near us, speaks English perfectly and I shall doubtless be chummy with her if she'll have me. Her husband also speaks English and Carl likes him very much. The other Consuls are all Consuls General, being much older men. The vices we have not finished calling upon yet — they will doubtless be more our age. Our Consul should be a Consul General here to hold his own with the rest but the Department does not yet realize the importance of the post — as they will before Carl finishes firing reports at them ...

Tomorrow we're going to take our two American nurses out to call on Miss Bacon, our nicest old American lady ...

One month later:

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We've had quite a busy week with our colony. Miss Bacon's man servant fell down stairs and broke his head, being drunk at the time. And is now in the hospital suffering from a combination of D.T.'s and brain concussion. He's been in her family for 24 years and as her people are all dead she feels that when he's gone she will be really alone in the world ...

Have just finished a piece of filet a half yard square and am trying to gather up the courage to start another piece of "fond" the same size.

We Americans spent last Sunday with Mrs. Ernst in her Arab villa by the sea and had a perfect day. Marjorie gets out of the garden so seldom that she was perfectly delighted with the trip and ran about Mrs. E.'s garden bending over to sniff at the flowers by the way.

In the meantime, Nettie was also interested in Melrose doings, especially the birth of May's twins. In mid-January she wrote:

...Your nice letter telling about the twins arrived a few minutes ago ... The Jackson twins! That sounds odd but doubtless the ear will become quickly accustomed.

Later — The birth announcement received this A.M. They weighed a lot, didn't they? Poor May, no wonder she felt bad ...

And a couple weeks later:

... I'm longing to hear about your twin nephews ... I don't wonder Anna J. [May's daughter] thought she couldn't take care of them. I suppose that by this time she's more than

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delighted and busy with them. She has something in the family that Elizabeth Small [Girl next door] hasn't, at any rate ...

And a little after that we hear the first about Anna's father's illness:

... We regret very much to hear of your father's illness ...

And then another reference to May:

... Glad to know May got home from the hospital without complications and hope she has gotten strong again by this time. How I'd love to see the two little boysies — love them for me hard please — hard as they'll stand at this age ...

... Marjorie continues to blossom as the rose. Truly she's so sweet and dear I don't see how she can improve upon herself and yet she does each day. She sends lots of love to Aunt Anna and so do her mother and father ...

As the spring progressed and the hot weather started we hear more about Marjorie:

...She doesn't suffer at all from the heat, pads about all day long in belly band [Babies were thought to absolutely need bands of flannel or other soft cotton or wool around their middles to prevent colic. Later on, in the event of any indisposition in young children, belly bands were an important factor in their cure. At least that is the way it was in the Kemp family.] and diaper — cool and comfy. Then when the sun goes down she goes out watering flowers in the garden with her little watering pot. Her rabbit scampers along in fear of the showers she descends upon him, and our little chickens, ducks and turkeys, just hatched out, come out to scratch with their mothers in the hot earth. Our roses have

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just about stopped blooming because of the heat, but I've carnations in bloom and other flowers so the garden is always petty ...

No long after this letter, before the heat really descended on them, Nettie writes:

... I am writing in the garden where it has been lovely all day long these last few cooler days. Marjorie is very busy in the corner feeding pea pods to her rabbit ... it's such a pretty bunny and they have such good times together ...

As the summer approached we read more and more about the heat, along with some domestic narrative. Nettie writes in mid-May:

... The heat has come with a rush and we have to shut up this big cool house in the morning and stay in it until the sun has set. In this way we do not feel the heat at all but the first few days were trying until we got used to being shut up all day. Marjorie fussed to go out in the garden and we all wanted to. It came all at once. Nothing gradual about it. And at the same time I let our good cook depart because I couldn't stand the scrapping that went on eternally between she and Emma. We were without a cook for several days and now we have another almost as good if not quite. A French girl from France — the Tunisian French are not at all the same thing — and she and Emma get on swimmingly both being Catholics and having the same ideas on all subjects ...

You needn't expect much from me for the rest of the summer. It's not that I feel hot, as I pass the day comfortably enough and keep under covers at night — but the heat outside has its deadly effect nevertheless and takes the life out of me as it used to do in Florida. The difference being that the heat is much greater here and that in Florida summers I

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always had a lot to do while here I've nothing. So it ought to even up and will I think after I get used to it ...

A couple weeks later we learn that the change in domestic help was working out well:

... Happily we are better off than we were before ... I feel that our meals are better prepared, even though they are not so attractive to the eye. Carl accuses me of regretting Louise, and I do in some ways, but I think I realize the house is better off without her. She was so much smarter than I am ...

Things were not all bad, however:

... There's a very attractive open air cinema here where we go for distraction when life gets too awfully monotonous. Also, incidentally, one gets cooled off there to the point of needing a fur, which seems impossible when we leave the house ...

And a month later:

... Going to hear Carmen tonight but unfortunately it's not Geraldine who sings it. Heard Faust last week. Not badly done either — over here they catch the singers before they get old or fat and it's much more romantic, if not as well sung.

Later — Carmen very well sung only the tenor is very tired after three weeks of every other night singing in this heat, and he shows it in voice and manner. Season is over now and we'll settle down to cinema twice a week ... Our little colony here are beginning to make

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surgical supplies for the American Red Cross in Paris getting ready for our boys. I hate to think of such things being needed but I suppose it's inevitable ...

However:

... All of our friends have gone out of town for the summer and have settled down to what will no doubt be a very monotonous summer, but comfortable enough the way we live ... Baby looks even better than in the winter ... She talks a lot — English, French, and Arab — and it's such fun to hear her ...

Mind you, this tri-lingual child was only one and a half. With the above was included a poem which Nettie sent to Anna and which I found as applicable to the ladies in our society in 1984 as in 1917.

Reference was also made in Nettie's spring and summer letters to goings in Melrose. A couple times she refers to Anna's father being ill. In one she writes:

... I am glad you have a "flivver" [Refers to a sports car] and hope you'll get out in it a lot. It will do you heaps of good. I always knew Bun was a nice brother and now I'm sure of it.

Glad to hear the Jacksons are going on nicely. I do want to see those twins most awfully. Does Brother [A family name for Willard Jackson, older brother to the twins. His nickname eventually became "Brud"] love me just the same? ...

Not infrequently, concern was expressed about Anna's overdoing:

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... A short note received yesterday told of your housekeeper's leaving and of your commencing again with a new maid. I do hope you won't overdo. It would be much better that all the family should take their meals out than that you should do that ...

The danger of Anna overdoing was always with us. She finally did "overdo" in 1937 and sort of fell apart at the seams in what was then called a nervous breakdown; perhaps still is. So it wasn't an empty threat.

Before we get into Nettie's letters of the fall and winter of 1917, let's see how Carl is progressing in his expressions of affection. In March he wrote:

... The winter climate here is neither cold nor hot — just that bleak, chilly, rainy kind that stirs up all my profanity.

I'm glad you found the *Vie Parisienne* [A magazine he apparently sent to liven up her life] interesting ...

By the time you get this I suppose war will be declared against Germany. Will the Campfire Girls come here if we do? [It always seemed incongruous that Anna had been a Campfire Girl, but she was.]

I'm glad you like the snaps of the baby. It is fun taking them and getting more so as she develops. She certainly is a live wire which she doesn't get from either of her parents. ... If Nettie were here she would want to send her love, but as she isn't I'm compelled to send mine.ECK

In summer he wrote:

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... Just now we are experiencing the Sirocco season which Nettie suffers from more than I. It is like a very hot day down on Washington Street and much more difficult to bear than the heat in Florida.

On the 14th — big day — [Bastille Day, a French national holiday] I attended a military review, and wore the unique combination of a morning coat and cork helmet. I was decorated, by the way, and by the Bey, as grand officer of the Nichen Iftik'har, but as I am forbidden to wear it have notified the Department and am waiting to hear what they want me to do about it.

It is now the month of Ramadan, and all the Arabs go hungry and thirsty from sunup to sundown. It is over Friday and I have to dress up in evening clothes and go to a reception at 11A.M

As I am telling Nettie continually of my devoted affection for you why shouldn't I sign myself

With love, Carl

The end of August bought some respite from the heat apparently, and Nettie writes her first letter in a couple months:

... The worst of the heat is over, at least I feel that it is and I have rarely been more thankful for anything ... there's just about enough of me to make a grease spot of and not a very large one either. Just thank goodness it's over, or most of it, and we can begin to live again ...

The Arabs from all over North Africa are now gathering here for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. As every tribe and district has its own costume, the variety of gay and beautiful

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colors and stuffs made into the flowing garments one sees in the course of a promenade is very interesting. Many of them are very handsome men and walk with a swinging graceful carriage that comes, no doubt, of generations of bootless ancestors and long marches in the desert.

I can understand the fascination these men have for many American women tourists; but I shan't go so far as some of them have. My racial instincts are too strong, and after all they are not white men. The handsomest are only mulattoes. But enough of Arabs for this time. I wonder what you'll think of them when you come over. I shall keep a very sharp eye on you knowing your preference for harem life. ... [Anna's search for an eligible Maharajah was sort of a family joke. Quite an old one as it turns out.]

And a little social life to add interest too:

... I don't believe I've written you since the dinner at the Governor's summer residence. Twelve covers and very delightful people. Carl suffered with the heat because his dinner coat is too hot for African summers, but I was comfy and enjoyed myself immensely ...

But in the fall, a year after arriving there, some of the charm seems to be waning:

...We have just had a few minutes of rainfall, our first in 135 days. Except for the gardens, which are few and far between, the city is as dry and parched as the desert. Our water supply comes from a mountain distantly visible and the heat has been so great and no rain for so long that they have been obliged to shut off the water every night at seven for weeks, turning it on in the morning before we are up. Ahmed waters the garden every morning and our rosebushes are full of buds, so we shall have some flowers soon. All summer long we have had none, and I wondered how the plants and trees kept alive in the blistering heat. We had to put my ferns out at night and take them in before the sun was hot in the mornings because the house was so dark all day they were dying for want

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of light — and one day the maiden hair was forgotten and was out all day in the Sirocco — late that afternoon I found it burnt and shriveled and quite dead, and no wonder.

As the fall of 1917 progresses we hear more and more about going home. From Nettie:

...We are still hoping to see the war end this winter so we can get home next summer — that would help Carl more than anything I think — and I do want Mother to see Marjorie. But at any rate we shall go as far as France and up into Savoy to get some milk and cream that I hanker for and let Marjorie see what real life is like ...

And a little later:

... We have just heard that consuls and their families can travel on our returning transports at a very low rate, almost nothing at all. But Carl says he won't ask for leave while the war is on, as it's unpatriotic — and Nettie says she won't make the trip alone again so we are no better off than if there were no nice big comfy transports going back empty. Such is life in the service ...

In the meantime Marjorie is growing in wisdom and stature:

... Marjorie is making great progress in French. Chatters all the time and very good French too. When we go home next year we shall have to speak French to her so she won't forget it. She doesn't talk baby talk at all and says everything correctly and entirely. Her nurse is a good stickler for that and insists that she speak properly if at all. She talks to Marjorie as though she were a young lady of eighteen and Marjie plays up to what is expected of her...

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... She has cut a stomach and an eye tooth this week and has taken matters into her own hands; refuses her baby diet and demands vegetables and plenty of them. She's very grown up indeed and is twenty months. I an enclosing a print — haven't been able to make any myself lately because the sun is too hot and melts the film — some sun! ...

... I asked Marjorie just now if she wanted to send “un gros baiser” [A large kiss] to Aunt Anna and she gave one immediately and said “Oui, Mamma.” And took me by the hand and pulled violently wanting to tart off at once to see you. And I told her that I should like nothing better but that it was too far to go today. Malheureusement. [Unfortunately] Why must good friends be so far separated when there are so few in the world? ...

Marjorie is beginning to need a brother now to take her mind off herself, but I don't feel able to have one in Tunis. The climate isn't good enough and all the doctors are mobilized and there never were any nurses; not as we know them ...

... (Marjorie) has had a spell of growing and is now a little girl. Decidedly I have no baby any longer. She still sucks two middle fingers of her right hand when she's tired and Carl won't let me do anything, about it until she gets her teeth. But that's the only bad habit she has. She graduated into cunning little panties the first of the summer and Emma has made her the daintiest little chemises to wear under her little corset waist. She talks all day long in French and Emma doesn't allow any baby talk either. I am beginning now to insist on English when she is alone with me. I haven't wanted to bother her while she was getting her French so easily, but now she knows so much there's no reason why she shouldn't slow up a little ...

A little later that fall:

... I am delighted to hear such good news from the twins; how I should love to see them and you, and see Marjorie play with them! She'd love them to death! She loves the photo

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of Anna and Brother [Anne and Willard Jackson] in the wall in my room and kisses it and talks to them in French. The poor child needs children to play with but among our very slight and limited acquaintance there is only one child of her age and she is very weak and often ill so that Marjorie can see her but seldom... It is a distinct effort for her to speak English but we are insisting a little more every day and it's coming easier now. She seems to understand that everything has two names and uses them interchangeably ...

... Marjorie is so interested in life now that she keeps all of us busy answering questions. Her Christmas tree will delight her soul this year, and I can't wait to get it ready for her. For a time she was dead set against speaking English and would close her eyes and shake her yellow head and say, "Non, veux pas dire ca." [No, don't want to say that.] You will admit that was discouraging, but now she speaks English often and without so much effort so we have hopes for the future ...

Now let's leave Marjorie for a while and see what has been going on in Melrose that Nettie was commenting on. There is a reference to Anna wearing overalls which seems a bit out of character (for Anna, that is):

... In view of the nationwide popularity of the overall at present it seems to me that you should have some public recognition of your services to female humanity in having introduced this costume. I really doubt whether it will ever be given up. If you wish, I will get Carl to write you up for a "Sunday Edition" illustrated with a photo on the general plan of the enclosed (enclosure missing) ...

By the very simple expedient of examining the boxes in which the tubes of toothpaste were packed I discovered about what I owe you and am now looking for something I think you'll like for the price. How would you like a filet brassiere, or would you rather have an embroidered cushion with filet inserts? ...

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Later: "Glad you like the idea of a filet brassiere and I shall look one up right away."

On the Melrose front, Grandpa Durkee was taken ill:

My dearest Anna,

I have been paralyzed in my letter writing centers for some weeks now and am doubly sorry to have been so neglectful when Grandpa Durkee was so ill. ... He is a wonderful old man and has so much enjoyed being active that it would be a great cross to him to be long in bed ...

Grandpa died shortly after that was written; around the beginning of October:

... Mail is at last arrived bringing your little note about Grandpa. What a dear child you were to write when you were so tired, but you must not try your strength like that. You know how much I regret it all for you and yours ...

Before getting into the letters written during the winter of 1917-18, it is time to review Carl's Fall correspondence:

Dear Anna,

I told Nettie I was going to write you a very affectionate letter, which I hope will not prove too much for you. I shall try and not make it too awful soft.

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The idea was raised in my mind by the wonder if you knew just how much you and the New England, which you are the living spirit of, meant to both of us. After a long hot summer which leaves us living in a dry and parched land, our minds revert to dreams of apple orchards, blueberry pastures, Melrose, and you as queen of the domain. If the war should end before we do, we hope to see all this in reality once more.

Since the 13th the weather has really been quite perfect, with the effect on me personally of making me sleepy as after a long nervous strain. After having been dragged through a knot hole one desires repose in which to regain one's natural shape ...

The last few days have been marked by the bleating of numerous sheep, brought into town for the annual sacrifice and feast of the Id al-Fitr which occurred yesterday. At the same time I had to dress up in my evening clothes again at 10 a.m. and visit the Bey at the Bordo Palace. My decoration, a silver star as big as a saucer, which was presented to me on July 14th, has to be turned in to the Department which I am busy doing today. Next year they will all wonder where it is — and I shall have to spend a stupid time giving one explanations which they won't at all understand ...

Life here is not very exciting and subjects to write about consequently rare. I am holding my description of the country until you can come and see it for yourself some day. And I don't want to overdo the affection for fear you might misunderstand or grow tired of it. Perhaps you are already, in which case, therefore, there is no hope.

Nettie and the baby send their love. Perhaps I do too.

Affectionately, of course, ECK

And a couple months later:

Dear Anna,

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This is just to add a line to Nettie's note to tell you that my boundless affection continues in spite of all reports of "tubbiness" — which says a great deal.

I am really delighted to hear of your continued better health and hope you will take every precaution to preserve it ...

As I have already expressed my affection, you may think I do not mean it if I mention it again, so will close

Simply, Edwin C. Kemp

Carl's December letter refers to the death of Anna's father:

... We were indeed grieved to learn of your father's passing away and there is, I hope, little need for words in expressing our sympathy. Words are, as we both know, of little value at such times...

I wish you could see (Marjorie). You would be proud of your work ...

I am glad if my "affectionate" letter was of any use. I stand always ready to fill up any small gaps of affection which Nettie may leave. As I have to keep her posted, I do not think you need worry until she makes warning signals. Most sincerely, Carl

Nettie wrote the same day:

... My dear my dear, what can I say to you? Carl has just brought up your letter written from Brandon. I feel too badly myself to be able to comfort you. I do wish I could fly to you and I should if the sea were not so unsafe.

I do hope Ernest will live at home. He will fill the house with his big wholesome self and he's good for you.

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What a hard winter it has been for you all. It seems to me now that that is why I felt so bad when I left you because I had a presentiment of all that might happen before I saw you again. I don't imagine you have any idea how dear you are to me, you and yours. If I may only be allowed some day a chance to show you, it's all I ask ...

Not long after, Nettie writes again:

My dearest Anna,

We had a letter from you yesterday. It sounded as if you were very brave. Too much so I fear. How hard Thanksgiving must have been. I had thought of it and had hoped you would all go away somewhere for the day ... How I wish you could come straight to us for as long as you were happy to stay. Carl and I have a lot laid up against the Kaiser because he has kept us so long apart ... Please don't sell quite all the cows! If you knew how I long for some Smith's milk. The milk here is absolutely undrinkable and we don't have it in the house, using only Nestle's canned for the baby and cooking. It's getting harder all the time to get things we want but so far the necessities are all forthcoming ... Compared with life in Europe we are in clover as this is a farming country ...

Summer's heat forgotten, they now had to contend with the cold:

... We are frozen half the time with wood fires going all over the house, but we are all of us much better for the cold; I realize that, only if anyone tries to tell you about the beautiful climate of Tunis and Algeria don't you listen ... We are all spending New Year's day with Mrs. Ernst and are praying for a nice day as she lives in an old Arab palace on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea and we are likely to be frozen stiff if the wind blows. Marjorie is out for her afternoon walk in her ermine furs looking very luxurious and warm ... Marjorie

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has just come in with pink cheeks and kissed the letter for "Poor Aunt Anna." She knows and loves you quite well In spite of her age when she last saw you ...

The day at Mrs. Ernst's villa was well spent because:

... We have rented Mrs. Ernst's villa for next summer so I don't have to worry about the heat here in town. The nights are so cool there by the sea that she sleeps under a blanket all summer so you know I won't have to walk the floor nights as I did last summer. It's a big old Arab palace of thirteen rooms so we can spread ourselves out and keep cool ...

There was some social life that winter:

... Carl has joined the most select club in town and spends an occasional hour there before dinner. I am glad because he needed new friends and didn't seem to know it. Our colony of two old ladies is rather tiresome at times and we get to feel as old as they are ...

However:

... We have had quite a gay week — so far. Saturday evening Miss Bacon had a dinner party for all the colony with hand painted place cards and menus — very well done indeed. Sunday p.m. we went to a tea given at the residence of the Governor General. About three hundred people present. A fine concert with tea served in l'entre act. I was very much interested to see how it was all done ...

Christmas was apparently a success, and introduces another section on Marjorie's development:

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... We had a very nice Christmas — We had the colony in to Marjie's tree as last year and we had high tea while the candles were burning. Marjie had a beautiful time as did we all I think. She behaved as though she were used to having Christmas trees every day but her eyes danced with joy. Everyone remarked on her self-possession and her excellent behavior. Emma is certainly bringing her up in the way she should go. I should never succeed in having her nearly as well behaved. She's not afraid of anything in heaven or on earth, but when Emma speaks she obeys. I know I spoil her but “Que voulez-vous?” She's the only little girl I have.

I'm beginning now to want 'Brother' but Carl won't let me have him here and yet if the war keeps on two or three more years there will be too much difference in their ages. I am very well now and if it were not for next summer, from which we cannot escape on account of those villainous submarines I would be tempted to try it ...

... I wish you could walk in now and see Marjorie busy serving tea in her brand new tea set spread on a little table just the right height and she makes a very sweet picture. She is waiting for a little friend, the daughter of the Belgian Vice, to come. This little girl is just Marjorie's age, eight days older.

Marjorie is the most fascinating thing I ever saw. Her imagination is working at a great rate now and she burned her hand very badly putting one of her sand cakes into her imaginary oven. She came running to tell me about it and have it kissed and of course I laughed and hugged her tightly ...

... Marjorie is absolutely the sweetest thing that ever happened... Carl loves her most to death and lets her go into the office and mix things up in his pockets in a way that would never be permitted to anyone else. She has an especially sweet little note in her voice when she calls “Papa”...

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Speaking of whom, what kind of letters has he been writing? At the end of the year he opens his letter with:

Dearest Anna,

Don't be startled by the adjective. As the only other Anna know is my step-grandmother, it is literally correct.

Your last letter received quite cheers us up with prospects of nursery-governesses etc. If it were not for the Kaiser, the cause of most of our troubles these days, we would suggest your coming over this spring, but as it is, I cannot recommend foreign travel either for comfort, or safety ...

By February of 1918 life in Tunis seems to have lost its enchantment for him:

... There really isn't anything phenomenal to write about except perhaps on the subject of my, and our affection. The climate certainly is not a fit subject for conversation just at this time. Marjorie grows in size and intelligence but retains her sweet disposition. We read the war news, which is not very exciting, and call on our Colony at regular intervals, which is no more so. We are simply marking time until the warm weather comes, when it will probably be too warm and there will be nothing to do but mark time until the weather gets cool again. You will probably think I am bored which is perhaps true, but still I am better off here than anywhere else I can think of, so I am not kicking at all ...

With love from us both, Carl

Two of the last letters from Carl to Anna were written in April and May of 1918. The first one refers to a fine or duty which Anna had to pay on one of their gifts:

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... Your letter to Nettie came in on the last mail and I am very glad to see that you are more rested from the weariness of sorrow, and settling down again to a daily routine of cow, pig and horse.

I'm sorry to learn of your "fine" but am very glad you let us know so we will not get any more of our friends in bad. Rules evidently differ at different offices, as some of our presents, although opened, were handed over without protest. I should say practice rather than rules for of course the rule is the same for all p.o.'s — and perhaps the soldiers in France are rather overdoing the lace presents to home folks. The lace people here say they cannot get orders filled because the Americans in France are buying it up so fast.

I am glad the rule does not extend to the Vie Parisienne which I shall try to send you from time to time ...

I wish Nettie could go over and spend a while in Melrose with you, as long as you have elected to be "Anna sit by the fire" instead of a globe trotter. Perhaps I should like to come and sit there for a while too, but my restless disposition would not let me stay too long....

With unquenchable affection,Carl

The second seems to indicate a lapse in correspondence from Anna:

... We both want to hear from you, as you, almost more than anyone else, mean "home" to us. Now that spring rains bring out leafy smells from the garden that remind us of June and syringia in Melrose, certain poignant sensations stir within us, which may be nostalgia, if not neuralgia ...

The baby and I are as thriving as we ever were. The latter individual is looking for his letter though, and closes to lay at your feet the choicest bouquet of affection,Carl

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Nettie continues to take Carl's affection for Anna in what was doubtless the right way. She closes a letter to Anna with:

... with all my love, and naturally I don't like to add all of Carl's, but you are welcome to half — I always was generous you know, but seriously I don't know of anyone we both love so much ...

Carl's final letter, written imid-July, shows that their summer residence on the sea has made the summer more bearable, and hints at a reluctance on the part of Anna to continue their correspondence:

Dear Anna,

I had just brought the enclosed letter from Nettie down to the office to mail when your welcome letter with the snapshots arrived ... I do not remember ever having seen a picture of your brothers before... The Smith nose seems to be in the same class with the Kempand Chase varieties. I do not believe that noses, like philosophers and hard cider, have been sufficiently noticed as a characteristically New England production.

Tunis has been viciously hot recently, 113 degrees day before yesterday, and we are delighted to be able to escape it at Sidi Bou Said. The Arab house is delightfully cool, even at noonday. I go out at noon and remain the rest of the day, as the work at the office is not particularly heavy just at present.

Tomorrow morning I have to come in early and attend a military review. It is the 14th and a repetition of our 4th, which was celebrated here as a national holiday and as enthusiastically as their own. I enclose some photos of the ceremony, which included a short speech by me — my first attempt at public utterance in French.

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You — and Nettie — need have no worry about the corruption of my morals. Even the corruption has turned to dust and been blown away, and unlimited Vie Parisiennes can have no effect whatever. That is perhaps why I send them to you — I do not realize the terrible harm they could do. Shall I send some more?

I appreciate your difficulty in writing to me, and therefore appreciate it the more when you do write. I too have my difficulties, for if you feel that perhaps you hadn't aught to, I have to be careful that I do not give you any reason for being sure you hadn't aught to. Nettie says she doesn't worry, however, so you shouldn't. So I feel free to sign with love from all, and particularly from

Carl

Mid-February of 1918 finds Nettie with domestic troubles once again:

... I have had to give Suzanne (the cook) three weeks off as she could hardly stagger about the kitchen. She has an aunt in the country who takes care of her after a fashion. She is very anemic and aught to go to France to work but doesn't like to risk the journey. So we have been doing without, Emma doing most of the cooking and serving at table, I taking care of Marjie (who has chosen this time to cut her four molars) doing what cooking Emma can't, and the scrub woman has been staying all of every day to do the rest. Cooks are a rare article around here and that's the only reason I've been worrying along with Suzanne ...

Soon after that letter Nettie writes that their house has been sold and have to vacate the first of June, a month before they have leased the summer villa from Mrs. Ernst. Therefore:

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... we shall move our furniture all out there and go to a hotel for June. What we shall do next fall we have not decided. Who knows if we shall be in Tunis then... Personally, I'm tired of keeping house, as I get about every two years anyway, and shall be glad of a few months boarding, so we shall see what we shall see...

The end of April finds Nettie suffering from homesickness, and her patience becoming a little thin:

... Marjorie is as full of the old Harry as usual and more so. Really, if she hadn't a nurse to keep her in order we should be lost ...

The move to a boarding house in Carthage cheers Nettie up considerably:

... Nous voici, at Carthage, where we are most comfortable and suffer more from the cold than from heat. Carl has the worst of the proposition going back and forth in the heat. But he protests that he doesn't mind and I hope that it doesn't tire him too much... I haven't slept so soundly for years and have a Melrose appetite. You know what that means.

Marjorie is eating a much more varied diet here, something she needed at home and I hated to commence, for she is 2 # years old now and growing fast so she needs strengthening food. I have never seen her so gloriously happy and gay as she is here. It's real country and seaside combined and a lot of nice children to play with on the beach... Saw in the morning paper that another transport has been sunk. Glad we were not on her. Dry land seems the safest at present. But I do get very impatient to go home at times... It's simply ages since we heard from you ...

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But by mid-August that lift has been lost, and thoughts are all on going home:

... Carl has asked for leave in October and if nothing happens, we shall be in Florida for Christmas. I am homesick to see them all and to have some real food. I shall probably stay longer than Carl can and spend the winter down there. Won't you come and spend it with me? ... I believe there's a good automobile road all the way down now so you can make the trip in your car if you want to. If Howard [Howard Jackson, May's husband, a doctor who joined the service at this time] has gone to war you can safely leave your brothers and home in May's care and go on a spree with me...

Carl is all tired out with the terrific heat and needs the change badly... We are as comfortable here in Sidi Bou Said as it's possible to be anywhere in North Africa in summer but I think it would be the death of us all three if we stayed long enough... We shall return to the hotel in Carthage about September 15 and await a chance to go home... We shall go on a convoyed transport from France as a consul's family will be allowed to travel that way. Few, if any, other passengers so we'll stand a better chance of being saved if torpedoed. I can hear what you are saying just as if I were there ...

So we come to Nettie's last letter, written August 23, 1918:

... We were glad to hear from you again and such a nice letter too. Sounded more like your old self and quite cheered me up.

I shall write and congratulate May on letting Howard go. It was fine of her and I know he thinks so too ... No indeed, Marjorie isn't all we need. She is clamoring for a brother or sister all the time and I want her to have one or both. This life in foreign lands without children would not be bearable. And as long as such a good nurse as Emma is procurable at \$15.00 a month we can have a family in peace and quietness. I shall miss Emma very much on the trip and after we are home. But in some ways she would be a white elephant.

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Speaking no English she would be very unhappy I am sure ... Your garden and your milk and cream make my mouth water. I think I could drink gallons of Melrose water without stopping to take a breath ...

Our boys are doing finely and they are adored in France, so my friends write me. They brought into the struggle the enthusiasm and young strength that was needed and just at the right time. Everybody feels that it will be over soon now.

It must have been a couple months later that Nettie and Carl and Marjorie left Tunis for the States, but Nettie was never to enjoy any of the things she was so looking forward to. Weakened by seasickness and pregnancy, she fell victim to the flu epidemic of 1918 and died a few days after they landed in New York.

There must have been a lot of discussion about what to do with Marjorie, and the decision was made to send her to Florida where she had a lot of aunts, uncles, and cousins. I do not know if Carl visited Anna at all during that winter of 1918-19. But he went on alone to his next post, Bucharest, Romania, and sent for Anna to join him in the fall of 1919.

The next bundle of letters are from Anna to her sister May telling of the trip over and of the early years of marriage.

Part II

Years ago when young consular officers were sometimes unable to return to the U.S. for years at a time, the problem of finding an American wife was one of considerable magnitude. Although not a requirement, such a wife was a great asset in creating a home which reflected American tastes and customs. Also, the children of such a marriage were

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more apt to grow up with some sense of national identity than were those with foreign mothers.

Carl was not a man who enjoyed living alone. He also needed a mother for Marjorie. His affection for Anna, so often expressed in the letters from Tunis, made her a likely choice for a marriage partner. Anna didn't save the correspondence between Carl and herself in the weeks and months following Nettie's death, and I do not know how much persuasion on his part it took to convince her to travel to Europe to marry him. From what she told me over the years I got the impression that she didn't have too much trouble deciding to go. The fact that her father and grandfather had both passed away probably aided her in this decision; although she had found partial fulfillment in keeping house for her brothers. When I commented once that that couldn't have been much of a life she replied, "Why, what better thing can one do than make a home for one's menfolk?"

Anne Jackson Armstrong, the oldest of May's children, told me that her earliest memories are of the commotion caused by Anna's taking off alone for Europe.

In a recent letter to me she wrote:

My mother supported your mother strongly on this proposed marriage and trip to Europe. I can still see Uncle Ernest pacing the floor telling my mother it was dangerous and unwise for your mother to go. My memory tells me that Mother told them not to be so fuddy-duddy about it and altogether gave your mother great support so that they (your and my mother) could override the objections. It really made a strong impression on me to hear my mother stand up to our uncles.

The only letter from Carl that Anna saved from that period was the one giving traveling instructions. I have included it in its entirety to show how detailed his instructions were. The other letters in this second group, with the exception of one to her brother Bun, are written by Anna to her sister May. Anne Armstrong remembers her mother putting all else aside when it was time to write a letter to her younger sister. The devotion these two

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sisters had for each other was deep and long lasting; lasted, indeed, until May's death at the age of 93.

I have copied the letters that follow with very little editing, deleting only small passages which were repetitious or which referred to people of no interest to anyone likely to be reading this narrative. The first of these letters (following the one of instructions) describes her trip across the ocean on the "Patria." She wasn't sure when she left where Carl was apt to meet her. The general plan was for her to sail to Constantinople, with the outside chance that he might be able to meet her in Marseille.

TRAVELING DIRECTIONS

Apply immediately to Cooks or American Express for reservations to Marseille, on Fabre Line steamer, preferably the PATRIA; the Captain Dechelle knows Mr. Gross, and may remember me. Explain you are coming out to meet me, as it may help you get earlier sailing. Also ask them to reserve, if possible, sailing on the Romanian steamer from Marseille to Galatz, and buy your ticket clear through, if they can sell it. Cooks has an office in Marseille, and they may be able to handle the whole thing. If not, buy to Marseille only. Do not let them sell you sailings to Trieste, or train to Paris.

Upon assurance of sailing, telegraph as follows: AMERICAN CONSUL MARSEILLE NOTIFY KEMP SAILING (month,date) SMITH. STEAMER (name) DUE MARSEILLE (month, date) SMITH. Also AMERICAN CONSUL PARIS NOTIGY KEMP CONSUL BUCHAREST DUE MARSEILLE (month, date) SMITH.

Apply immediately for passport for Romania via Marseille and Constantinople, for the purpose of joining Edwin C. Kemp, American Consul, Bucharest, as wife, and attach the enclosed letter to Mr. Hengstler to the application. Have a dozen prints made of your passport photo, as you will need the balance over here. If the necessary visas are not made before your passport is delivered to you, use the enclosed cards when calling for your visas. If the offices are crowded, have no hesitation in elbowing your way to the clerk

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and present my card. You had better go down to New York the day before the ship sails, to give yourself enough time to get your passport.

Though just barely possible, it is hardly probable that I can meet you in Marseille. Don't look for me, anyway. I shall write to the Consulate there to meet you, but if they fail to, take a carriage and drive to the Consulate, 10 Cours Pierre Puget, hours, 9-4. If the door is closed, pound, as they are often there later. If it is Sunday, or for any other reason no one is there, you can drive around the corner to Mac's boarding house, opposite the Palais de Justice, on the chance of finding him there. If not, drive to 8 Rue Jaubert, where you will be almost sure to find Mr. or Mrs. Gross, even if you have to wait for them, and they will be glad to help you. She understands a little English, he speaks it. You can also go to Mr. Gaulins villa 331 Avenue du Prado (Mrs. Gaulin is away, but he or Eugene, the servant, may be of assistance. If all these fail, Mrs. Cummings at the British Sailors Home in the Rue de la Republique can help you find Mac, and Mr. Burnett, of Budd & Co., Rue Beauveau, or the American Express Company opposite, or Cooks, will help. There is also Emma Mercier, 11 Rue de la Fausse Monnaie, quite a ways out, who would take you over to Mrs. Davis, who lives near by, or to Mrs. Burnett, whom I do not know so awfully well, but would help in a pinch. The idea is to get in touch with some one of the Consulate, who would find you a place at one of the hotels, the Hotel du Louvre, Hotel Regina, or Hotel Splendide. They speak English at all these places, and you can be comfortable until the Romanian steamer sails. If the people from the Consulate meet you, you will have no difficulty with the customs, and if they do not, present the enclosed card. You could leave your trunks while hunting up the addresses given. The Consulate will take you in hand when you get there, and will help you get your ticket on the Romanian steamer, and get away comfortably.

As soon as you know the date and name of the steamer sailing, have the Consulate telegraph as follows: AMERICAN CONSUL CONSTANTINOPLE NOTIFY KEMP
CONSUL BUCHAREST SMITH DUE CONSTANTINOPLE (month, date) STEAMER

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(name) also AMERICAN CONSUL PARIS NOTIFY KEMP BUCHAREST SMITH DUE
CONSTANTINOPLE (month, date) STEAMER (name).

The Romanian steamer is said to have fair accommodations, but you had best carry some tea, sugar, and an alcohol (solid) burner, with a couple candles. Enquire about food before sailing. I understand the purser boards you at about 25 fcs. per day. You will probably have some women passengers aboard with you. The daughters of the Romanian minister at Rome went home this way he told me. I believe the steamer stops at Naples, Athens, Constantinople and Galatz. I expect to meet you at Constantinople, if I know what boat you are coming on. If I do not, send a note to the Consul General, Mr. Ravndal, asking him to notify me as quickly as possible, so I can be at Galatz. You could also have some one telegraph me at Constantinople. Do not go ashore at these places, but send a steward, unless you are with some Americans or British who know what they are doing. If I do not even get to Galatz, go to the American Red Cross people there and have them telegraph the Legation here, and if for any reason I was unable to travel, you could come up with some of the Red Cross people, who frequently make the trip, leaving your trunks at Galatz, as traveling with heavy baggage is very troublesome.

The trip takes about 12 days to Marseille, and about 10 to Galatz. People who have made the trip say it is quite possible, and even interesting.

Cash check, and buy 200 francs in French money before sailing, for change when you arrive. At Marseille, change the rest, left after buying ticket, into French money, which will be good the rest of the way, and you can probably get a better rate than in the U.S. Tips on the Fabre Line would be about 5.00 to the stewardess, 5.00 to waiter, and 2.50 to the deck steward, but your fellow passengers will give you an idea of the usual amount.

If Cooks can guarantee you a comfortable and direct sailing to Constantinople, it might be advisable to take it. In such case cable Paris and Constantinople to advise me of date of arrival, so I can be there to meet you. Upon arrival, if I do not meet you, go to The Consul

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General or the Embassy, or if they are closed, to Cooks, or the Pera Palace Hotel, or the Tokatlian Hotel, or the American military headquarters. You will probably find a lot of Americans, and certainly British, who will gladly help you out.

It will be more advisable to go to Constantinople direct, and certainly simpler, than via Marseille, if you can get sailings. I do not know, however, as there are any direct boats yet.

In case I failed to meet you in Constantinople, I would write the Consulate General where to send you, either overland with the courier - a hard trip - or by the Romanian steamer on to Galatz.

Don't get worried by these detailed instructions. I have tried to cover every possible slip, to save you worrying, but as a matter of fact, I have no doubt but what the Consulate will meet you at Marseille, and you will have no trouble at all; and it will certainly take an earthquake to prevent my meeting you at Constantinople. Neither must you let the sound of these places unduly impress you. They are only stations and boat landings along the line, when you come right down to it, and their interest varies only with their facilities for the traveling public. You will probably have Americans or British with you all of the way, to help you out and help pass the time. Certainly I would not advise the trip if I did not think it could be done with a reasonable amount of comfort.

On Board the Patria, 11 November, 1919

... After we left the harbor Thursday we ran into a storm and for three days were on end all the time.

I spent Friday and Saturday flat on my back and didn't care what happened. Everything fell over that wasn't hitched and even the stewardess was ill. One or two appeared at table each meal but not more than that. Saturday night in the night we commenced to

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roll instead of pitch and I was able with many interruptions to make the deck on Sunday morning.

Monday was quite comfortable and yesterday as calm as a mill pond. Today it has been choppy and many squalls, due, they say, to our passing the Azores soon. No one could get any service at all when they were ill. The food is impossible and everyone much disgruntled with everything. ... The bells in the rooms are never answered and all the help retire at ten and you can't possibly get anything done after that. It is a very good introduction to what I shall find from France on, I suppose. During the storm a man from the steerage jumped overboard but it was so rough they made no attempt to get him. Two people went insane and one man who was confined got away and caused much excitement one night. So you see life is hardly dull.

Thursday — Very rough again this morning but we all have our sea legs now and don't mind it. ... It seems ages since I left home but it is three weeks tomorrow. This boat is due at Palermo on Wednesday and Marseille the following Saturday. I will send a line from Naples but wait and mail this at Marseille for I think it will go through quicker. It seems a long trip from there on and you may tell Aunt Jean I did think the first day of turning back at Marseille but now I feel that even being headed for home will have no effect. I certainly wouldn't want to go back on this boat.

November 17 ... We passed the Azores and Gibraltar and have been following the African coast ever since. ... After that we had more rough weather, the boat standing on end day and night. Saturday it calmed down and another man jumped overboard. It seems to be the habit on board this ship.

They stopped, made a circle several times, threw over life buoys etc. but no one appeared.

The next night the crazy boy nearly finished his parents so they had to put him in a straightjacket.

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The food and service still continue poor. Mr. Smith and Mrs. Brooks and one or two others are all that make life bearable ... We have very exciting movies on board. The films date back to the first productions years ago.

Afternoon tea has just been served and after washing my cup and spoon myself I managed to drink some today. It improves the flavor to have the china fairly clean. I'm in hopes the next trip won't make me a bit seasick for I am quite accustomed to rough weather now. This old tub either has no cargo or is a very wobbly ship. We had such a list at Gibraltar I was all worn out holding it down on the other side.

There are three "vamps" on board. Donald [Donald Durkee was a distant cousin and a protégé of Uncle Ernest] will explain to you what they are. The Captain is very attentive to one.

The ship is getting very gossipy now and the people at my table are all worn out trying to find out why I am roaming around alone. They ask all the direct questions they can and then try the indirect method. Finally they wanted to know if I were a Romanian princess traveling incognito.

November 20 — Naples. We arrived at Palermo about seven yesterday. I went ashore with Mrs. Brooks and Mr. Smith and wished afterward I had stayed on the boat. I would certainly have had a better impression of Palermo if I had.

It was very picturesque from the landing but horribly filthy as you know. We had luncheon, visited several churches, the palace, etc. The land was most unsteady at first after such a rough trip. ... Nearly everyone is getting off at Naples. Only a very few go on to Marseille. I am too happy to exist today anyway for I received a wire from Carl here saying he was waiting for me at Marseille. You can't imagine what that means to me! I will cable you on landing and you need have no more worries about me. Perhaps we will go by train to Bucharest. I do not know.

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This boat is really dreadful. We have no water while in dock and I have to wash my face with the drinking water. If we don't all die of typhoid it will be a wonder. One of the steerage did and I am not surprised.

I forgot to mention Mr. Smith had his pocket picked yesterday and a camera with a sixty dollar lense taken. Naturally he isn't very fond of the Sicilians either. They are a bad lot. The boat is full of guides etc. today. One man offered to drive me out to Pompeii and back, an hour each way. No one wants anything but American money over here. They scorn their own money and clamor for dollars. It seems very strange. ... Everyone who has been over before nearly faints at the high prices. They don't realize it is as expensive to live on this side as the other now. ... The stewards are all very affable now. Two of them tucked my feet up for me this morning but when I hadn't the strength to go on deck or even reach the telephone they were all useless. Even the phones work the last two days.

The Dante A[inaudible] is next to us and evidently expects to go out soon as the steerage are all on board. All headed for New York and yet I don't want to take it the least bit. I haven't been one bit homesick all the way even when the boat behaved so badly. It is when I am settled down and have a chance to realize I am not just touring the country that I shall feel it.

Sat A.M. November 22

Just a line to let you know I am okay. Carl at the pier. Have just sent you a cable. We leave for Paris tomorrow night — to be married there on Monday. Will write more later.

The marriage did take place in Paris, on November 26. Anna said later the ceremony was all in French, and she never did know what all she had promised to do, having just said

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“oui” in the appropriate places. She always had warm feelings for Paris and frequently said she wanted her ashes scattered from the Eiffel tower. Her next letter is from

Bucharest, Romania

December 1, 1919

... I will try to explain the household arrangements but they are most complicated. The trip from Paris was a very tiresome one but in spite of dirt, filth, and delay of twenty-six hours in arrival I am still cheerful, very glad to be here and not too weary.

The trip through Switzerland was wonderful, our only clear day. The food on the train was really very good indeed. I enjoyed all my meals with the exception of not having water to drink. I had just enough wine in the mineral water to take the curse off.

From Trieste on we lost time at each station and the food ran out so we couldn't get breakfast this morning. Last night they had candles stuck in bottles in the diner, their supply of gas having given out too. The ride through Yugoslavia was most uninteresting, just plains of corn and wheatfields for miles and miles.

Carl had to leave at every frontier and watch the trunk — my big one — to see they didn't steal it. They have a great habit of stealing the whole baggage car. I never could have come through alone on the train. It is fearfully complicated. Carl's card is useful over here and makes them stand around. Our baggage wasn't touched and when we entered Romania my big trunk was safely in the baggage car. I saw it myself. The steamer trunk is coming by a freight boat to Galatz. ...

Carl wired for a month's leave hoping the Patria wouldn't be too late for him to meet me. His leave is up today so we just made it.

Now about the place:

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Downstairs the Romanian lady who owns it lives by herself. She speaks English with an accent but it's a great deal to have her speak at all.

Then "Amaryllis", or Miss Shaw, treasurer of the Red Cross, has a room on the second floor where the dining room and this small salon are. Also a toilet on this floor. The bath being way down in the cellar, 'as 'twere'. It is all furnished by the madame. I don't know her name. On the next floor are our rooms. A sitting room not heated, for summer use, and a smaller one for winter with a stove. A large bedroom opening out onto a balcony with a dressing room; the latter is not on the balcony as it sounds. We have running water in the dressing room but it only runs certain hours. There is a dressing table, two wardrobes, a chiffonier, chairs and a comfortable couch.

Madame runs the servants, there are three in all. Cook, maid and laundress.

The Vice Consul, a Mr. Whitney, and a Miss Bateman, Red Cross worker, take their meals here but I don't know whether they will continue to or not. It is almost impossible to get a place of any kind here in Bucharest. I shall start in on French and enough Romanian to get along with the servants for Carl has his eye on a house by ourselves in the spring. Mr. Whitney said this noon Romania was to sign before tomorrow or all aliens would have to evacuate by tomorrow night. No one knows where. I hope and pray they sign for I at least am happy to be settled in one spot for a while. [I assume that what was being signed was some kind of international agreement connected with the armistice.]

... The luncheon, at one, was excellent. Chops, peas, and something came first I didn't recognize but it was very good. Custard with sauce, fruit and Turkish coffee in the salon afterwards. The other ladies all enjoyed a cigarette but I felt I would rather wait for a little private practice ...

The water here Carl says is safe to drink and that helps out a lot. The city is dirty and just at present very muddy, it being a foggy dismal sort of day.

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They all feel dreadfully to have me land under such conditions but it doesn't affect my feelings any. I told Carl coming down that if we could live together peaceably in a two by four compartment with all the discomforts and weariness of foreign travel now I thought it was a pretty good test. One isn't, of course, supposed to quarrel on their honeymoon I suppose, but you do have a chance to see each other at their very worst on board a Wagon Lit rolling across Serbia nearly four days and four nights. I shouldn't advise anyone to make the trip just for a sightseeing tour. Romanian is not a very pretty language as far as I have been able to observe. German is spoken a great deal, but French goes anywhere. I shall be glad when I can converse in it.

Loving you all and wishing you didn't have to wait three weeks to know how happy and well I am.

Anna

Bucharest

December 13, 1919

Dear Sister,

I can't understand why I don't hear a word from any of you for mail from Florida has come in, written a week after I left. Have you disowned me altogether? Perhaps you are waiting to hear of my arrival but I hope not, and I hope something may come soon ...

It rains so much it takes ages to get laundry done here. Some part of every day is rainy — something like England when we were there.

I have an iron, an ex-electric one someone left here. It is loose and wiggles so when I try to use it I hardly accomplish anything. What wouldn't I give for a couple of our old

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fashioned ones. They have gas here instead of electricity so my electric one would not have done any good in this house. Last night we were invited to dinner at the place we hope to get in May. It is very attractive. A house by itself with a garden fenced in, as all the places are here. The rents are awful and this one is unfurnished. That is, the people want to sell the furniture and everything that is in the house.

We had a very nice dinner (with six Red Cross workers). The men all pass me cigarettes and say, "No, not yet, but you will soon"... [Anna never did take up smoking]

I haven't yet become accustomed to not knowing what is going on in the outside world and papers dated before I left home look good to me. If anyone wants to send anything let them do up a newspaper or a magazine. I read the Journal of Commerce with much interest, understanding very little of it.

My French lessons haven't begun yet but I think in a week or so we will be able to settle down to it. Most people are not interested in foreign languages so soon I guess. They say they speak English in some of the shops but I haven't noticed it yet. My shopping experiences haven't been very many. Carl very unwisely showed me where he bought candy. It is good, too. That's the trouble over here. One can get anything by paying for it. Though the candy is only ninety cents a pound at the present rate of exchange. The lei, usually worth five to a dollar is worth thirty now ...

I think Carl was quite worried at first for fear I would be homesick and lonesome after the newness had worn off but the longer I am here the better I like it. I had my heart so set on being homesick perhaps that is why I am not and I had no idea in my head that Bucharest would be more wonderful than anything we had at home. Carl owes a great deal to that first trip I had across.

Bucharest, February 2, 1920

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Dear Sister,

I am enclosing our ticket to the Grand Ball on Saturday evening or to be more correct Sunday morning. Carl and Mr. Whitney took a box so we could see this gay Romanian life that is so raved about. Mr. Whitney invited a Red Cross girl and we asked Miss Shaw.

We went to bed right after dinner, setting the alarm clock for eleven. Then we dressed and started out about twelve. It was an awful effort to get up at that time of night and go out into the cold world but nothing to the way I felt yesterday.

All the people on the floor were in costume or masked and the boxes were filled with spectators in all degrees of undress. Still no more extreme than I have seen at the opera. The most common form of costume was pajamas and kimonos. Old cotton crepe affairs I wouldn't wear in the privacy of my room.

I suppose it being bed time they came as they were?

They had dancing at the stage end of the opera house but most of the people just walked around among the crowd. People were coming and going all the time so it didn't get monotonous.

After we had watched them a while we went down through a long dark passage-way to a queer little buffet. There was a large one upstairs but they told us this one was more fun. A gypsy orchestra played weird music and (don't tell Aunt Jean) but our waiter talked German instead of French. We had cold turkey, salad, pickles, bread and champagne. All very good. I was nearly starved and didn't dare eat all I wanted. The Romanian officers and the gay girls came in, had a few drinks, much love making, and then would go up to wander around again.

We went back to the box and watched the crowd until four when we all nearly fell asleep and decided there was nothing to this Romanian night life. I was glad to have seen it, but

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once is enough. We were all dead to the world yesterday. This week, Saturday, we are going out for a steak dinner at the Elysee, the best cafe here I guess. That is the best decent one. Then to see "Phi Phi".

Opera opens up February 23 with Aida. I think an Italian company. Last night I dreamed I was home for a few minutes. I couldn't even stop long enough to sit down but told Mrs. Scribner I just ran over to see how you all were and get my mail ... I had my passport and came back on the next boat.

So you see I must be happy or I wouldn't want to come back again.

I was singing very joyfully yesterday, you know what it sounds like, and Carl felt overjoyed to hear some outward signs of my being happy. He thought I was from my appearance, but I hadn't mentioned it. 'That's me all over.'

The next letter was written to her brother Bun (Burnell Smith).

Bucharest, March 16, 1920

Dear Bun,

... I wish you would please call Aunt Jean up at once and tell her that I shook hands with the Queen last evening, did not have to curtsy and did not sprain my ankle backing out. It was not a court presentation and I fear she won't remember she ever met me. The minister gave a dinner to the government officials and foreign ministers and "Leur Majesties, Le Roi et La Reine". We didn't come in on that but later he had a reception or ball, more the latter I should say.

About eleven we started out and it was just four when I crawled into bed. There was such a crowd and all they did was wander around from room to room meeting everyone one

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ever met before (sic) until after the queen left. Then the crowd thinned out so they could dance.

At first the Queen was in one room and the King in another. The minister asked me if I wouldn't like to meet her, and Carl met the King. Then they placed their chairs in the center of the Ball Room and the crowd formed in back of them to watch a Russian dancer perform. They had a band and an orchestra so the music was continuous. When we left the band was playing "Row, Row, Row". Now don't laugh, that's the honest truth! Their favorite piece over here is "Tickle Toe" from "Going Up".

Of course they had eats and an unlimited amount of champagne. The gowns were not very startling. May will want to know I wore my pink dress [Still in existence in a box in my attic; a real gem], white slippers etc. I know you won't care.

If I could see you all, I could tell you lots more I can't write about, about the affair. Little things that are interesting but it's too hard for me to go into detail. You know how it is?...

The movies are, well, you know how I liked them at home and these are worse. The theatres are not yet back to their pre-war days and the opera, which has been postponed week by week, is still to come. That leaves nothing but the cafes and I haven't yet seen a "real" one so I can't say. All I ask for is a nice steak dinner now and then and they do have them ...

The lilac leaves are coming out fast here and the grass under this last snow is very green ...

The next letter, written in the later spring of early summer of 1920, finds Anna making preparations for her expected baby. She mentions Mrs. Green, another American lady

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there whose baby was due shortly after hers. It was her son Tommy who gave Ernest Kemp the nickname Kempie, which remains his family name to the present day.

Bucharest, Spring 1920

Carl had a cable from the Department promoting him to Class 4 which made us both very happy for it's only a year since his last promotion. If we could only find some way of having Marjorie come over before winter we could settle down very comfortably and happily for the next year. ... I do hope the shirts and bands come and as soon as you hear that the baby is here and alive do send the next size necessary for this is an impossible place to get anything for babies ... Nothing but outing flannel for didees over here and no slips or dresses whatever. Mrs. Green's party [another euphemism for giving birth] isn't until December so any duplicates I may have she stands ready to relieve me of. Miss Spellman, the head Red Cross nurse left here, came to our rescue and presented us with layettes. How I wish you could see them! However, some of the things will be useful if not ornamental and will do for patterns. My layette came from the Boston division of the Red Cross and I looked carefully for a note from someone I knew tucked inside somewhere. Perhaps some of Aunt Jean's knitting. There were several bonnets and two very pretty jackets. Two teddy bear blankets and one heavy pad will be most useful. Then later I received a nice basket of bandages and medicines and a raft of washcloths ... I'm sure the Red Cross never did anymore good in their lives and I shall pass the things on to some Romanian. Miss Spellman is a conscientious soul and felt a bit guilty about letting us have them I think. I'm sure I think we deserve most anything if we are willing to have children in this far off land.

We went into a Paris shop the other day and asked for five or six different things, all simple articles but they didn't have one of them and what is more, didn't care either. They follow you around as if you were a shoplifter so you can't take any comfort looking about. Carl says that is because they have lost things and are suspicious of everyone. I know I do look like I had half the store with me but it's all mine.

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In March of that year Anna is sounding very enthusiastic about setting up housekeeping. As she stated earlier, the house was for rent unfurnished, but the furnishings then in the house were all for sale, so in the end they had to buy all the furniture in order to get the house. I was surprised to read this description, because I had pictured it as much less attractive. Maybe her descriptions were less glowing years later than they were when she was all enthused about setting up a home. That was an occupation she excelled in.

And she set up a lot of them in the years to come.

March 19, 1920

... The Red Cross [who had been living in the house] left us some provisions and a bed all ready to make up (to repay us for any) breakage and for use of the furniture for a month. We kept the man who has been on the place eight years and does everything. Also his wife who will launder and clean, and Minna, who is now cooking for us until our cook comes on the 21st. Then Minna will do the upstairs work, serve and answer bells. At present the man is doing that and gets along very well, considering. I unpacked slowly and have one case still to do but we are using our own things now and how good it seems. My table linen looks very pretty and the silver is lovely. I just left out enough for our every-day use. They say the servants are absolutely honest but it makes it easier for them to have a little to keep track of.

We have a full dinner set of Austrian china and an everyday set which is more or less broken up. A set of cut glass, including all the wine glasses one could think of and five decanters ... I never was so well supplied with china and glassware.

I have been tired but my digestion straightened out as soon as I began exercise and I feel so much better to have something to do and a place of my own to roam around in.

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Minna does the marketing and I try to plan the meals but it's hard when one doesn't know the language. ... Our four servants will only cost us sixteen dollars a month at the present rate of exchange but it's going down fast and I don't know what we would do if it reached normal ...

We have two bedrooms upstairs. One is large and very airy with double doors out onto a porch. It's just like sleeping out.

Every window looks out into trees for there are so many everywhere. Yet it isn't dark in any of the rooms. They all have sunshine some part of the day. We have water here all day long which is a great blessing and although there is no gas we can have a hot bath anytime by building a little wood fire under the boiler in the bathroom. It doesn't heat up as I feared it would wither.

Our only drawback is lamps and we hoped to have electricity put in. When the gas and electric strikes and shortages are on, lamps are fine but otherwise they are awful. Some of our furniture is really very nice. The dining room set — square table and twelve chairs, one large sideboard and one smaller one with glass doors — are of heavy carved oak. I never saw anything like them at home. I didn't like it at first, it was so ornate and heavy but I'm getting to like it more and more. The library has a long heavily carved desk, chair and bookcase to match, also in the oak. Here in the salon we have the glass backed piano, a very pretty desk of imitation ebony I guess with inlaid mother of pearl and bronze. This I claim as mine. I've always wanted a desk with secret drawers so I'm quite happy. ... Lots of nice comfy chairs and silk hangings for the windows. ... Oh yes, we have more clocks than I ever saw in one house. All Austrian and German and a safe made in Vienna. One of the clocks is a mahogany grandfather clock; keeps excellent time. I'm beginning to think I shall hate to leave here for a new post.

If we can get Marjie out and the baby safely here I know I shall be happy in spite of wanting to see you all. Only two days have I been the least bit homesick and I think that

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was because I didn't feel well and spring was coming and made me want to get outdoors. The large back porch looks out onto the garden and there is where I shall live as soon as Johannie has time to clean it up. ...

All the other Americans are envious and want to go to house-keeping now, though when I spoke of going they didn't want any part of it. The care and worry of servants etc. Having a home is worth everything to me, and to Carl too. Our only worry is getting Marjorie out. Mr. Whitney expects to go home in the fall and he will be able to see that Merrill [a cousin of Marjorie's, about ten years older than she] and Marjie come through safely. ... Carl said the other night that Marjie would soon be able to come alone. ...

Have just been down to unlock the supply closet for Minna to get her daily supplies of coffee, sugar, etc. which we keep under lock and key. I never saw so many keys as I have. I found keys to every door in the house. By locking the supplies the servants have no chance of supplying their relatives and friends.

I forgot to mention our beautiful bronze chandeliers. They really are awfully messy but at night with the candles all lighted the rooms look very pretty. It costs too much to use them except on state occasions. ... I do hope you aren't worrying about me for I'm so well and happy. ...

Bucharest

April 13, 1920

Dearest Sister,

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Your long letter of March 25 came Saturday and I intended to answer it at once. Everything has been tied up here for Easter so I doubt if it would have gone on anyway. No deliveries for three days and no banks open.

How thankful I am you have the home place to go to for a rest now and then and I'm so glad Mrs. Scribner helps out so much. I do think it's a shame you have so much illness. I'm worried for fear you won't take care of yourself but goodness knows how you can. [Anne Armstrong writes, "That was the year of disaster for the Jacksons. One or the other of us children had an operation every Thursday for six weeks - mastoid or sinus. How mother ever lived through it I'll never know."]

If we ever are sent to a hot climate you must pack up and come too. It's lovely here now, just like our month of May. There is also an east wind so much like ours at home I can almost smell the salt air. This comes from the Black Sea I suppose.

Mrs. Eirich, Mrs. Interiden and Mrs. Green are coming for tea this afternoon so I may stop this any minute. Carl wanted to know if it were an announcement party. My silk dress with the blue bib is a blessing. My corsets nearly kill me and with that I don't look too bad. ... This week I shall try to get some material and have two dresses started. I think I shall ask Mrs. Eirich to help me. My side view in shirt waist and skirt is — well — you know what.

Saturday night the (Easter) services were, instead of Sunday night. We went about eleven with Mr. Whitney and some friends of his. Such a crowd I never saw in a church and I could only stand it about fifteen minutes or so. Standing up and the bad air were too much for me and I just got outside in time.

We sat on the porch and watched the crowd come and go — all carrying wax tapers. It was really very picturesque. The peasants in costumes of course. Across the river rockets were going up and truly it seemed more like the Fourth of July than Easter. Sunday I was

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too all in to go to church again so we stayed around home and went for a walk in the afternoon.

Oh yes, I remember they gave us so much to eat at noon we could hardly wiggle. For breakfast we had cosnac — like our coffee rolls only different — and Easter eggs; beautiful colors too. At luncheon I can't begin to remember the variety, and dinner too. Yesterday Carl went to the office in the morning to work on accounts and in the afternoon we went to the movies — The Redemption — then walked through the Cismigen, the principal park, and had tea on the way home.

My trunk check came and the trunk itself should be here. They say they have received word it has left Braila. Perhaps after the holidays are over it can be located. They never have just one day off here. They take several for they realize they need one to recover from the holiday. A saint is celebrated every few minutes.

I truly think I have sleeping sickness. This morning I couldn't wake up when Paraschim came to do the room and slept through it all. I did manage to get up in time to have my bed made before Carl came home.

Wednesday

I had such awful gas last night I couldn't finish this. It didn't let up until Carl gave me a treatment. It's all gone today but I've kept quiet and left my corsets off until now. ... It is lovely out here on the terrace tonight, very comfortable with only a sweater.

I'm wondering about the flannel, whether to send home for it. ... Carl says there is a large supply of diapers in the freight en route from Tunis but I've lost all faith in freight. There are some white baby shoes in my cedar chest and I want that blue coat too. I'll find out this week just what I can get here and what not and send some money providing we have any. Getting Marjie out and buying furniture makes a hole in our finances. The exchange isn't as favorable for us as it was a month or so ago.

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We had a nice time yesterday, or at least they all seemed to. Mrs. Interiden is a Russian married to an American and had some wild tales to tell of her trip out of Russia. Her mother died two years ago and she has only just received word of it.

Mrs. Green loaned me a lot of American magazines and books. One I have just finished — Christopher and Columbus — you would like it I think ...

I do hope you are all well again for keeps. Have you any help at all besides Foss? [Miss Foss - May's helper and nurse for the children. Anne Armstrong describes her as a "treasure, a gentle competent soul ... I have never seen her equal since."] All these strong healthy peasant girls could do so much good at home.

Bucharest, June 14, 1920

... Thursday I shopped from four o'clock until half past seven. Mrs. Eirich went with me and we accomplished quite a lot. [The following items were purchases for the baby.] I bought a clothes basket, small basket for toilet articles and the lining and dotted swiss for both. We have five four legged stool affairs which will be just fine to set the basket down in any room. I'm thinking of making a cretonne cover for the stool. I found some batiste after a hard hunt but no flannel.

On Friday Mrs. Green was here for luncheon — our first guest in our new home. ... She lives in Philadelphia or New Jersey and does not want any of her people to hear about her affair [euphemism for giving birth, like circus and party used in past letters] until it is over.

... Mr. Greble leaves for Paris today, hoping to find his wife and young son waiting to come to Bucharest. He has rented a place a mile out from here. We are already a mile from the center so he hopes to have a car soon. Also a cow which interests me more than anything.

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I would almost be willing to go out and milk it twice a day for him for the sake of having good milk.

All the Americans now are anxious to go to housekeeping. It's funny because when I first spoke of it they thought it very foolish. After they see how nicely situated we are and what a comfort a house is, they find a hotel room lacking many comforts they hadn't thought of.

This morning I set Johannie to scrubbing the dining table. It is warped a bit in the center and the felt was all stuck on to it. He managed to get it off and polished it up so I can now use my luncheon cloths. He insisted they wanted to go straight instead of corner-wise but I told him that was American. Elena is washing in the backyard in a long wooden trough affair and has the boiler set up on a couple bricks. The clothes were nice and white last week but I don't see how she does it. She didn't iron the table cloth well so I'll try and show her tomorrow how to do it.

... The weather is lovely, neither too cool nor too hot. I surely like this climate so far. Our phone they promise to put in this week and Carl is making an appointment with a doctor to come out this afternoon. He has been recommended as the best obstetrician and as long as he has to be a Romanian we just have to try him out. I'll know better after I have seen him myself. Carl went to see him and said he looked intelligent. There is a woman physician also well spoken of but I've a horror of them for some reason. I am more anxious about the nurse myself and hope that I can stay here so Carl can keep an eye on things and not let them abuse the child. I certainly can't complain so far for I have been so well through it all. It is nearly lunch time and I must pick some fresh lilies for our table. The garden is lined or edged with tiger lilies all in bloom ...

Housekeeping in the Romania of 1919 was the subject of many of Anna's stories over the years; about the lack of proper lighting, the barefoot waitress serving food in the semi-darkness of candlelight and about the pig the cook kept in the basement kitchen.

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Bucharest, June 18, 1920

Dear Sister,

I had to celebrate the 17th [Bunker Hill Day, an important holiday in Boston] all alone yesterday. No one from Boston is here just now except Miss Spellman, a nurse, and she is too busy to celebrate.

Saturday June 19, 1920

... Tuesday morning Mrs. Green invited me down there to have a shampoo. She has the girl come to her hotel room and do it which is ever so much nicer in every way. We both had a shampoo and wave, drying our hair on the balcony of the best hotel in town, facing the main street. Can you imagine hanging your hair out of Fremont Street? That's what makes this such a queer city. [Aunt May once told me how embarrassed she was as a young woman when a caller happened to see her with her hair down. It was apparently something done only in private.]

So far I haven't seen any baby carriages on the Calea and I told Carl I should certainly walk down to meet him every night this fall and let him push the baby home. The street is very narrow, the sidewalks more so, and such a crowd of people from five o'clock on.

Monday the 21st. I am having a dreadful streak of laziness the past few days. Even writing this is an effort. Am feeling alright though and the doctor said everything was okay so far. He's a queer little man and speaks no English. His midwife is a Pole, speaks French and German and stays on the case a month. He promised to be on hand himself and comes again July 1 to see how things are progressing. September 1 is his date and very appropriate it would be to wait for Labor Day I think.

... This place has been sold again we find and our present owner wishes us to move so he can occupy it. Fortunately our lease holds good for two years. He offered a premium

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but Carl said nothing but another place as satisfactory as this would induce us to move now. Then he wanted a few rooms — in the basement — anything to live in for the city is dreadfully overcrowded.

(last part of this letter missing)

I had always had the impression that Anna suffered considerable bad health before the baby arrived. She referred to it as gastritis. Perhaps that explains the lack of letters for the next four months. Of course it is also very possible that those letters were just not saved. Charles Ernest Kemp arrived on August 27. The doctor who had promised to be there was away and they settled for whoever they could find. It was not a pleasant experience. Not being able to converse with the doctor didn't help the situation any, although I believe Carl was able to do a little interpreting with his French. After it was all over, Carl, Anna, and the doctor had a spot of brandy, which seems a nice touch.

Bucharest, October 22, 1920

Dearest Sister,

I thought that after the baby came I would do nothing but write to all my family and friends but — there's no need to explain to you.

It isn't because I am so dreadfully busy either, but there is always something to look after or I'm too tired to write. Fraulein has been a great blessing. I don't know what I would have done without her.

We got the baby all over his navel trouble. Then I had a hard cold... After that the baby's colic grew worse and worse. He cried day and night until we were all worn out so yesterday we had another baby specialist. He really showed signs of intelligence and is the first one who has handled the baby as if he knew how. He gave him a thorough examination to see if there was any other cause of his crying, examined his stools etc. (I'm

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a connoisseur on the latter now.) He said the baby was getting too much to eat, to weigh at each feeding and give only 90 grams. He has a little cold and I was afraid last night would be croupy. Crying so much aggravated it too — but he wasn't and is a bit better this morning. Fraulein has gone to bed for a rest and I have him here in the library sound asleep after his bath. My clothes basket is very easily carried around from room to room, but I want a carriage now so I can take him out. Just to make things more interesting Carl came home with chills and fever Tuesday noon; would go back in the afternoon to keep an appointment so when he came at night was feeling miserable. I got a hot bath and hot drink ready for him but that was all he would do for it. Wednesday he stayed in bed all day and was out again yesterday rain and all. It has been very cold and now I guess the rainy season has begun. A general strike has been advertised all this week but so far things are still going. Johannie came in with a stove poker over his shoulder this morning to show me the soldiers were out.

Saturday — Last night the baby slept from ten to five and is better this morning. I gave him a bit over this morning for Anna came in while I was feeding him and I didn't watch closely enough. Consequently he's been fussy since.

Our laundress all but asphyxiated herself last night. She lives in the little house in the back yard and when she didn't appear this morning Anna tried to get in. She must have managed to open the door. I couldn't quite make out whether it was unlocked or not. She was certainly in a dreadful state but Fraulein pulled her out of it. It was cold so she built a fire out of charcoal right on the cement floor, no outlet for smoke or anything. I wonder she didn't die before morning. There's one thing about this life over here. It's always full of excitement. Mrs. Breble's servants are always shooting around or chasing each other with carving knives. (She) has had enough of housekeeping and goes back to the hotel when the Greens leave.

We received one doctor's bill — Jaharesco 7,000 1ei or \$150 for the delivery and two weeks care of me. What Dr. Lions' will be for the baby I don't know; and two specialists

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since. Colonel Amint inquired around for us what the Romanians paid and found he had more than doubled the price for us. That's the way with everything over here. They think because the exchange is favorable for Americans they can do them.

Monday — The baby is so much better; sleeps and eats as he should. Also is beginning to talk and smile something beside a sickly gas grin. Of course he is beautiful and no "squalling brat" at all. What a dreadful remark to make. [No clue as to who made that remark. Possibly her brother.]

I suppose you are reading dreadful tales of conditions over here but don't worry. Things are running very smoothly and the strike seems to have failed completely. Carl is tired out and needs a rest for he's been running the Legation for several weeks in addition to his two consular offices and home cares.

... We have dinner at eight and by the time Anna has brought up her daily account and received the menu for the next day it is time for bed.

Bucharest, Thursday, November 18, 1920

... I wish we could be over there with you on Christmas. Ernest is almost large enough for a turkey bone. Uncle Bun will have to buy another turkey when we all get together again. Much love to you all. I shall think of you up home as usual on Christmas day. No one knows how I long for some of Mrs. Scribner's cooking. Carl says he wishes the enclosed check were 100 instead of 10 but he'll use the other ninety bringing me home next year.

BucharestFriday, November 19, 1920

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... I sent you a letter yesterday via pouch but didn't have time to tell you all the things I know will interest you. I'm ashamed to own up to some of them anyway and have been waiting to see how everything was going.

The baby lost weight and was really sick from being starved to death. That was one trouble I had hoped to avoid but after Dr. Lion took her scales I had to guess at what he was taking and didn't give nearly enough. He cried day and night for so long that Fraulein and I were both nearly sick. Carl found some scales at last and I discovered I had only half enough milk for him. That was why I was worn out. It tired me out every time he nursed and I lost my appetite etc. We sent for the baby specialist again and he said at once we must get a "doica" or wet nurse. You can imagine how that pleased me but it seemed to be the only thing to do. The doctor said it was so much better than to try the bottle with prepared foods or cow's milk. Bottles can be had I guess but we aren't sure how long the cow will give milk or what care it has before it reaches us. So I buried my feelings after one long weep and Carl went out in search of a nurse. The first didn't pass the blood test but one came the next day. I only wish you could have seen her. We took the baby too so she wouldn't lose her milk. It was only eleven days old and she had been out of bed since the second day. Came direct from the hospital here. That's what I call excellent care. Fraulein cleaned her up a little and we installed our new family upstairs next door to Fraulein's room. At present we only number ten in the household.

Later: A raging snowstorm outside; real old northeaster. We just came in from the Greens. The wind blew so I could hardly get my breath all the way home.

I am feeding (the baby) twice a day still and have begun to pick up already. I doubt very much if I can keep it up long but he is gaining on the Doica's milk so I don't worry. I was weighed last week and only weighed 107 pounds. I never was so thin before ...

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That was the last of the letters from Bucharest which were saved. Shortly after that Carl was transferred to Budapest, Hungary. Fraulein apparently went with them, but the Doica was left behind. I recall that there was some problem finding canned milk, which was finally obtained through one of the relief agencies. By the time the following letter was written, it had been decided that the whole family would travel to the U.S. and get Marjorie.

Budapest, June 10, 1921

Dear Sister,

Your letter arrived yesterday and just saved your life for I was really feeling quite deserted. The package was here on our return from Vienna and I'm most grateful to you.

Everything was okay. It's been so hot I put socks on Kempie so the stockings will wait until we are on board boat I guess. I am glad indeed to have the things, especially watch ribbon and silk stockings. I've put so much money into them here and all for nothing for they don't last a minute.

I screwed up my courage, left the baby with Fraulein, and went to Vienna with Carl last Friday. We went up by train, five hours on the hottest day we have had. It just about discouraged me for the trip home. The Fosters (Vienna consul) put us up there and we had a very nice visit. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Vienna is an improvement on this city in some ways but the location here I like much better. They have much nicer apartments, quite palatial, but no help. The more I go around the better I realize how fortunate we are and have been in the help question. Saturday we visited Schonbrun, the former palace, and Sunday we were out in the woods all day. You know how much better that appealed to me than doing museums and public buildings. I couldn't help worrying a little about the baby but we found everything fine when we got back. He had gained and had another tooth. We came back by boat Monday, a very pretty trip.

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We are talking some of sailing from Hamburg, taking Fraulein as far as there, then sending her to Berlin. If we do that she'll have to wait until then for her operation. [An operation for rupture which was postponed due to overcrowding at the hospital.] We may be able to get someone who is going over to help with the baby. I would like the best suite on the Olympia sailing August 3, but I think we'll do well if we get there steerage. We have sailing lists now from all the different companies and I 'm getting quite excited.

You spoke of condensed milk for the baby and that is what we are going to try. The doctor has some Dutch preparation we can get here. He is eating all sorts of vegetables besides his soup and cream of wheat once a day. I do hope the trip won't upset him. He is so well and happy now.

I'm so glad Bun is back at the old place. You don't know anything about how I long to be there ...

Kempie rolls around anywhere he wants to go but doesn't creep. I hope he will wait and walk without creeping. If nothing happens we'll be leaving before very long ...***

They did make it over to the U.S. that year, with a nursemaid along for Kempie a Hungarian named Mitzi whom Anna thought was part gypsy. Anne Armstrong remembers her as being quite a sensation "who flitted around on her toes, almost danced whenever she walked, and was very good with Kempie."

Anne also recalls that Marjorie, two years her junior, was a very quiet and subdued little girl when she came to Melrose to meet her new mother and rejoin her father, and that Anna was most anxious to do the right thing to put Marjorie at ease. She never stopped trying, but they were two very different personalities and although they came to appreciate each other they never did understand one another.

In order to make the change easier for Marjorie back in 1920, Carl and Anna brought back to Europe with them Marjorie's older cousin from Florida, Merrill, and "Grandma Mann"

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the widow of the retired consular officer who had been influential in getting Carl interested in the Foreign Service. They stayed in Budapest for six months. Marjorie was five by this time.

The flat in Budapest faced right on the Danube River, close to the Elizabeth Bridge, a well known landmark. The exchange rate was still in their favor, and they continued to live very comfortably.

Budapest, February 14, 1922

Dear Sister,

Don't you like the careless way I write and ask you to buy me things and forget to send a check? That's foreign style.

Please forgive me. I'm trusting to your not having time to shop before this reaches you. There's no special news except that I am growing so stout it's painful. Since the flu I have been gaining steadily and am about ready to weep over it. I'm going to walk it off if the weather ever improves but now we have been having a long cold spell. The river hasn't been clear for weeks. Sunday we went out again to see them skate. I do like to watch the dancing. Then we took in the Art Museums as they are nearby. Carl and I get along beautifully together there for we walk through as quickly as possible and enjoy the same things — landscapes. Grandma Mann and Merrill have to go to church every Sunday to see if the British Consul won't by chance be present. There's a British chaplain here for a few months but I'm waiting for Easter before I go.

Sunday P.M.: The Wilsons had us all out for tea. Marjorie too so she could see the baby. Saturday evening we saw "The Hamburg Girl". Horthy was also present with his family. And afterwards we had dinner at a cabaret. Very disappointing after Bucharest. I do wish Aunt Jean would come over, she would so enjoy it all. Opera seats have gone up so we've taken to light operas and movies. There's a tiny movie theater nearby. Yesterday we saw

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Elsie Ferguson and "Fatty Arbuckle". Of course I realize he is taboo but I had never seen him before.

My new cook and maid come tonight and Sunday I hope to have eight for dinner. I trust this maid can serve without dropping everything she touches. I'm trying to have some new clothes but the dressmaker is slow as usual. ... The children are both well and getting fat like their mother. Marjorie is learning to read but it's some effort for her still ... Kempie says some German words, no English."

Budapest, June 13, 1922

"... We have taken to bathing at Margit Sigi in warm sulphur spring water. They made a pool last fall and it certainly is fun to spend the afternoon there. I bought a bathing suit which is conspicuous because it has a skirt so next time I shall try out Carl's one piece one. I was weighed the other day. At present it is about 10 pounds too much. Our cook is too good. I never ate such good things in my life. Marjie says, 'Why Mama, we never had three courses every noon in Florida.' I have cut out dinner at night. Carl has oatmeal and I have a vegetable and strawberries and cream. It costs us more to live than it did when we first came back ...

Kempie is getting to be a real boy. I feel quite proud of him for he is wearing pants and waists and so far few accidents. I thought we never would train him but have at last. [Poor kid wasn't even two yet.]

One of my maids was a bit "Bolshie" but a few old clothes have changed her attitude and things are okay again. Fraulein is just fine...

I'm afraid the children will be grown up and married before we get back again. We are feeling dreadfully poor just now ... "

Tatra Mountains August 9, 1922

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"I know you'll be wondering if we came or not for the last time I wrote I wasn't sure I could make it. We left home the 31st with the Wilson contingent. She has her brother visiting her, making quite a party in all.

The mountains are different than any I ever saw, something like the White Mountains. No snow on them now except in patches.

The hotel is passable, the food not very good and it's costing us more than we can afford to pay. The exchange up here is only 40 to the dollar and prices are high besides. I'm afraid we are spoiled for things are lots cheaper with us. The grounds all around the hotel are lovely, woods and grassy slopes so the children can ramble around safely ... "

Budapest, August 18

Our trip did us good in spite of poverty incurred and now I feel able to settle down to a winter of simple life ...

We came back Wednesday leaving the hotel at six A.M. and arriving here at seven. A long hard trip for the children but they stood it beautifully. I decided however that next year we would try to find some reliable person to leave them with and take a trip by ourselves if possible. While the air up at Tatra was fine both Kempie and Marjie lost weight because of the food. They eat like little pigs here at home... I've been wonderfully well, no active nausea at all but am beginning to lose my sylphlike form. Isn't it aggravating! I hope it's a boy, in which case it will be Edson Burnell or Stuart Burnell. [It wasn't a boy]

It's no use, I think you and Toss will have to come to the rescue...

Carl told Mr. Hegstler that a transfer later than fall would be inconvenient so I guess we are here for another year anyway.

Budapest, September 13, 1922

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... I've some more wants as usual but I'm afraid to have them sent... I don't know of anyone coming out so I guess I'll have to risk it. I want some first size bands and shirts — silk and wool — probably I ought to have three of each. If they are too expensive I'll try to get along with two.

I don't believe I've written since Carl was away at Belgrade for the ball game. He was gone from Friday night until Wednesday night. Budapest wasn't so dreadfully beaten this time and they had a fine time.

I was feeling very frisky all the time so Mrs. Wilson and I spent the day together at her house. Out to the Ritz for tea one afternoon etc. It doesn't take much to keel me over and I was deathly sick the day Carl came back. Every so often I have to take the day off.

Kempie had a nice birthday. The Wilsons were here for lunch with Diana or Dinah as Kempie calls her. She's getting awfully cunning now and Marjorie is anxious for a wee baby. She tried to exchange Kempie for Diana but if she waits long enough she won't need to.

... We get lots more visiting Americans here than we did at Bucharest. Yesterday we saw Geraldine in the movies. I don't know the name — it was all in Hungarian of course. It was the first time I had ever seen her ...

I wanted a brown velvet coat for Marjie for best — the material alone came to over twenty dollars so I think we'll have to have other material. I think I shall have my serge suit made into a dress for I have to have something warm in the house this winter... It's been quite cold and one thinks of winter fires. Our coal and wood is in and now I have only to get the stoves in order.

We had an accident in front of the house not long ago. They are painting the bridge and one of the men fell into the river and was drowned before the boats could reach him. We all saw it and Kempie still talks about the "arme Mann". [Poor man] Another one fell in

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at the beginning of the work but knew how to swim and kept himself up until the boats arrived ...

Marjie and Kempie were glad to hear from Anna and I meant to answer her letter before this. Marjie is laboring over her reading with her father just now. Studying comes hard for her for she cannot keep her mind on anything for any length of time. Are the twins in school this fall? Schooling is going to be a great problem with us especially with so much difference in the children's ages. Most of the people send their children to England or Switzerland as soon as they are old enough ... Oh dear I dread the next few months more than I did the first time. I didn't know what I was dreading then. Do write as often as you can...

We had a queer pair for tea yesterday. The lady had found the sweetest "atmosphere" in Budapest, especially one day in the street car. Believe me I can't recommend the atmosphere I have found. It's usually so crowded one can't breathe. I had all I could do to keep from smiling ... Aren't you coming over to visit us next spring? I shall never have the courage or money to get to America with three children ...

Janet Kemp made her appearance on March 15, 1923, and three months later the family moved to Danzig, then a free city, now Gdansk, a Polish one.

The last two letters in this collection were from Danzig.

Danzig, May 5, 1924

Dearest Sister,

Bun should be arriving in England now and I can hardly wait for him to arrive in Danzig.

The last week has been most strenuous. They did find us an empty apartment in Danzig proper — eight rooms besides kitchen and maid's room. We piled out on the 30th for I didn't care to be on the streets on May 1st. [The day celebrated each year by the

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Communists] The crowds gathered here in front of our house but all was quiet. You should see us move all our belongings, we are a picture. It's some work to have to live in one place up to the last minute as we had to, though of course the other was furnished. We bought beds and what we absolutely had to have and are really quite at home already. I've just sent to Ernest to please transfer some funds for us so we can really settle down. The difference in rent will soon pay for the furniture.

We are on the Commonwealth Avenue of Danzig — three long flights up and no lift. I think I've lost several pounds already. We've a small balcony for Janet praise be for I don't know how I shall ever get her up and down.

Our rooms are lovely and large, sunny, quiet and warm.

Buying furniture takes all our savings and then some so our trip home will be delayed another few years I guess. ...

My last maid left me without notice on May 1st and I was so peeved. Anna is my only help besides a cleaning woman and we are both all in every night. The place had to be thoroughly cleaned besides the unpacking. ... We've an add in tonight's paper and I should have some applicants tomorrow.

It's colder than Greenland though they say it's May. ...

Marjorie's Aunt Maude visited them the following summer.

Danzig, June 22, 1925

... Maude wishes to be remembered to you and says to tell you this is just the right place to come for a rest. She seems very happy and is having her first rest in many years. We have been to most of the points of interest but the weather has been dreadful. We never did have a heat wave and have suffered with the cold, not having any Franklin stove. I've introduced Maude to our various friends. Not speaking anything but English she enjoys the

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English people most. The other crowds are all interesting to watch but speak a number of languages — mostly French — together. Today Maude heard Marjie's lessons, examined her books etc. and says she is way ahead of her age at home. I'm so glad for I had no way of comparing and wondered sometimes if I were doing all right. If I can educate the children at least as far as high school I shall feel quite happy. Teaching is not my forte and I hate it but if I know it's giving them what they need [I] am willing to do it until we are sent to some place where they can get proper schooling. [Anna taught Marjorie using Calvert School until she was eleven years old, when she started school in Danzig. It was after that that she came to be called "Mani", because her German friends had a hard time with "Marjorie". Anna also taught Kempie for a couple years, and I was exposed Calvert School kindergarten materials. We all attended schools when we moved to France, although I was taught at home after a fashion until I was eight.]

Another one of the things I said I never would do...

We are getting poorer all the time and if something doesn't happen soon I don't know what we shall do to make ends meet. Prices are terrific here and they have just put new duties on most foodstuffs. Maude has been to market twice and wonders how we manage. Carl turned all the cash over to me some months ago to see if I could make it last any longer but I can't seem to help any ... (Maude) has made me a blouse and pongee skirt since she came. Sews just as you used to — all done in a jiffy and with apparently no effort. Marjorie made a dress for herself which Maude cut out for her. Did very well indeed so I tell her she will soon be able to sew for me.

We are all well and how I wish you could see the children. Janet is talking now and sweet as she can be ...

On that happy note the bundles of letters come to a close. With them the first person accounts of the early years of the E.C. Kemp family also end. However there is much more to this story which may or may not get written up in the years ahead. In the interim it is

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appropriate to include the eulogy given by Ernest Kemp upon his mother's death at the age of 89. In it he captures the spirit of what Anna Smith Kemp accomplished in her long and eventful life.

Anna D. Kemp 1889 - 1978 A Eulogy by C. Ernest Kemp

There are many stories and anecdotes that I could recount which would give an indication of my mother's character and her philosophy of life. Her family was always the center of her existence and she devoted all of her energies to providing a home for my father and instilling in us children those characteristics of thought and behavior which have stood by us all these years. In order to better understand my mother's complete devotion to her task and the strength of character with which she faced many unusual situations I thought it most appropriate at this time to briefly review her life. So many of the successes we children have had are attributable to her and to her devotion to the one task she considered most important, that of raising another generation. Without such a background any tribute to her would be only partially complete.

My mother, Anna Durkee Smith Kemp, was born in Melrose, Massachusetts to Albert M. Smith and Mary Anna Durkee Smith. Both her mother and father came from Vermont and settled in Massachusetts. Melrose was always home to my mother, even though she spent most of her life traveling to various parts of the world. Mother was the last of five children but never knew her own mother, who died in childbirth.

She married Edwin Carl Kemp on November 26, 1919. My father had been previously married to one of mother's best friends, who died during the influenza epidemic of 1918. He was stationed in Bucharest, Romania as American Consul. The American Embassy and the Consulate had been closed during the war and it was my father's job to reopen these offices in the war-torn capital of Romania. He wrote to Mother a year after his first wife died, and even though they had never had the opportunity for courtship, he asked

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her to marry him, to which she agreed. Because my father could not take enough time off to come all the way back to America, they agreed to meet in Paris where they were married and then went immediately on to Bucharest. Although this sort of a whirlwind courtship would not be so surprising today, at that time it was practically unheard of, and is some indication of my mother's character. Although extremely conservative in almost everything she did, and always proper to a fault, she had a deeply buried streak of adventuresomeness which would show up from time to time and which was largely responsible for the interesting life that she was to lead.

Coming from the well-ordered existence in New England to beginning her life as a married woman in Romania in 1919, was a very difficult adjustment for her to make. Conditions there were terrible, and most of the conveniences that we call necessities today were unattainable luxuries then. I was born the following year, by candlelight, on the kitchen table in a rather elegant but run down third floor apartment. Mother and Dad have told me many stories about our life in Romania, some of them hard to believe.

From Romania we were transferred to Budapest in Hungary, and there my sister Janet was born in 1923. This was the post that mother remembered with the greatest fondness. She had been sickly for a good share of the year before but in Hungary she regained her health and was able to enjoy the many advantages of living in one of the most beautiful and cultured capitals of Europe; and this at a time when the American dollar was better than gold and Europe was rapidly recovering from the ravages of war. It was in Budapest that we were joined by my stepsister, Marjorie.

We then moved to Danzig, on the Baltic Sea, and it is here that I first remember my parents. These were still the years when raising a family was a precarious and chancy business at best, and raising a family in a foreign country presented even greater problems. It is here that I remember the care and love that my mother bestowed on us children, though at the time I don't suppose I really understood the sacrifices in time and worry that were involved. Colds, which today pose no threat, thanks to antibiotics, in

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those days could turn into fatal pneumonia, and it was not uncommon to hear of some childhood acquaintance that had succumbed to a childhood disease unheard of today. Mother nursed us through our illnesses and watched over our health with meticulous care. And here she also taught me how to read and the rudiments of writing.

From Danzig we moved to Le Havre, France, and here my younger sister and I started school. Our family life was always very close-knit, and I still vividly remember the weekend drives we took together in the French countryside. It was here, also, that I first came to realize that Mother's role, as she saw it, was to run the family and to provide the proper background for the position my dad held as a representative of the United States. She filled this role with enthusiasm, understanding, and dedication.

In 1933 we moved to Canada, and for the first time we were able to live a life more characteristic of what could be considered the normal American way. Two years in Moncton, New Brunswick were followed by two years in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Here the family first split up; I came to college at Michigan Tech, my older sister moved to Florida, and Mother, Dad and Janet moved to Bremen, Germany. Although we split up physically, the family remained very close due to the ties that Mother had forged during out many years of travel together. Janet soon left the family to go to college in Vermont and Mother and Dad remained in Bremen.

While in Bremen, war broke out in Europe and it was here, again, that Mother's character became evident. While most of the wives and families of American Foreign Service Officers stationed in Europe left for home Mother decided to stay, because, as she so often told us, her mission in life was to provide a family life for Dad and us children and as we children were all settled in college or in jobs in the United States, she felt her place was to stay with Dad, no matter what the consequences might be. After spending over a year in wartime Germany, being bombed by British aircraft and spending many nights in a basement bomb shelter, Dad was transferred to Halifax, Nova Scotia and of course Mother came too.

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The trip across war-torn Europe was a long and harrowing one, but with Mother and Dad's remarkable ability to make the best of any situation, they arrived safely in Canada where they remained until the war was over.

From Halifax they moved to Jamaica, which was Dad's last post before he retired. Mother always spoke well of Jamaica, where she lived in considerable comfort. By this time all her children were well established and as Consul General, Dad's income was sufficient that they could now enjoy the rather sumptuous living that was possible in Jamaica in those days.

After retirement, Mother and Dad moved to Melrose, and with the exception of a couple of years in Florida, they remained there until my father's death in 1971. My older sister had died in 1966, but Janet and I made frequent trips to Melrose and the family ties remained as strong as ever. It is here again that a facet of Mother's character comes through. After all the years of travel, and the many experiences she had had, she returned to what had always been home to her. Two of her brothers and her older sister were still living in or near Melrose, and she again became part of her original family. Her high school friends, with whom she had corresponded all the years she was away, were still close by and this circle of friends again became a major part of her life. In 1974 failing health and the loss of Dad and all her brothers and sister induced her to come to Michigan to live with us until her health required that she move to the Long Term Care Unit at War Memorial Hospital here in Sault Ste. Marie.

During the many hours of reminiscing that Mother and I did after she had moved to the hospital, her one recurrent theme was how deeply she felt that she had had a really wonderful life. Therefore as the end came closer and was more and more on her mind she made it plain she could leave with very few regrets.

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Her going will leave a gap in our lives, but the memory of her sense of humor, her innate kindness, her strong sense of duty, and above all her considerateness towards others will remain forever with those of us who knew her.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA (Anna Durkee Kemp)

Note: Bernette Chase Kemp and Anna Durkee Smith Kemp were dear friends. Bernette married Edwin Carl Kemp, who entered the Consular Corps in 1914. After Bernette died November 2, 1918, in the influenza epidemic, Edwin Carl Kemp married Anna. The correspondence of the two women was presented to the Foreign Service Spouse Oral History, Inc. by Anna Kemp's daughter, Janet Doell.

Spouse: Edwin Carl Kemp

Spouse entered service: 1914 Left Service: 1947; Died 1971 Bernette entered service: 1914 Left Service: 1918 (died) Anna entered service: 1919 Left Service: 1947; Died 1978

Spouses Position: Consul General (1935-47)

Posts:

1914 St. Pierre and Miquelon, French possession (islands) 1915 Detailed to Marseilles, France 1916 Tunis, Tunisia 1919 Bucharest, Romania 1920 Detailed to Budapest, Hungary 1923 Danzig, Free City of 1929 Le Havre, France 1933 Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada 1935 Winnipeg, Canada (Consul General) 1937 Bremen, German (Consul General & Sec. in Diplomatic Service) 1941 Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada (Consul General) 1945 Kingston, Jamaica (Consul General)

Maiden Name: Bernette Chase Parents:

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John Frank Chase

Maria Merrill Chase Place/Date of birth: Augusta, Maine; January 5, 1884 Date/Place of Marriage: Saluda, North Carolina; September 11, 1909 Profession: Nurse, and a Foreign Service spouse for four years, 1914-1918.

Maiden Name: Anna Durkee Smith Parents:

Albert M. Smith

Mary Anna Durkee Smith Place/Date of birth: Melrose, Massachusetts; December 27, 1889 Education: Melrose High School Date/Place of Marriage: November 26, 1919; Paris, France Profession: Foreign Service spouse

Children of Bernette and Edwin Kemp:

Marjorie K. O'Mara (born 1916; deceased 1966)

Dorothy Kemp (born 1911; deceased 1912, age 1 year)

Children of Anna and Edwin Kemp:

Ernest Kemp (born 1920)

Janet Kemp Doell (born 1923)

End of interview